





HER DIGNITY AND GRACE.

VOL. II.

HER DIGNITY AND GRACE.

A Tale.

BY

H. C.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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HER DIGNITY AND GRACE.

CHAPTER I.

MRS. PAGE'S LETTER IS READ AT THE HALL.

THE Rector and his wife went up to the Hall in the evening of the day when Mrs. Page's letter was received. The dessert had been laid in the conservatory, and they all repaired there.

"This is quite delightful," said Mrs. Dale, as they entered.

"Yes, the place seems intended for tea and dessert. I am so glad you have come," said Mrs. Askham, addressing Mrs. Dale; "I scarcely hoped you would, you keep so much at home. But why would you not both come to dinner as we wished?"

“ My husband had an engagement, and I do not like to leave home often, on account of Jeffrey. He is too old to be left entirely with the maids, who have no control over him.”

“ Now, Mrs. Dale,” said Mr. Askham, “ are you ready to hear this interesting letter? For myself, I am quite impatient to hear it. Perhaps you have read it already?”

“ No; it was decided that no one but Alan should know its contents till it was read here. He has told me what has been found hitherto, and some day I hope to see the marvellous things he has described to me.”

“ That you shall; but we keep them all locked up, as much in their original state as possible, for there is no knowing to whom they belong.”

Mr. Dale then read the letter out, prefacing the reading by saying, “ I will go straight through first, and we will make our comments afterwards.”

When he had finished he said to Mr. Askham, “ What do you think of it?”

"I am thoroughly perplexed and wonderstruck. There are several strange coincidences which, if one could admit the thought, would almost identify 'the Lady Ann' with poor old Mother Pendle; and yet I can scarcely believe such to be the case. In the event of your submitting any questions to Mrs. Page, I consider one should be, Had 'the Lady Ann' any other Christian names besides Ann? for the letter to me was signed 'Ann Caroline Editha,' and you have read each of those names as prominent in the family history. Secondly, was Mr. Lystone in any way connected with them by blood? Thirdly, who was Mr. Lystone? for the mention of him is very vague; why was the marriage so much disapproved? what relations had he? who was Ann's mother? was she connected with the Lystones?"

"We will put down all these questions for my sister; her memory is so good she may be able to tell us more, no doubt."

"Her memory is wonderful," said Mrs. Askham; "how delightful her society must be."

"She is indeed a most agreeable companion, is she not, Emily?" said the rector, addressing his wife.

"She is; and to hear her talk of things gone by is like reading an old Chronicle. She has chapter and verse for everything. I am always regretting the long distance between us."

"Come into the drawing-room," said Mrs. Askham; "they have taken in the candles, and Mr. Dale will perhaps write down the questions to be asked." Then she continued, addressing Mrs. Dale as they walked to the room, "You really must come and see the pretty things, for, as my husband says, who knows how soon we may have to send them elsewhere! He will not admit the idea of their belonging to him; but I am convinced from her letter she intended it, and that the 'certain conditions' relate to some money matters, the record of which we may yet stumble upon, for she made no mention of money in her letter."

Mr. Dale was writing, and when he and Mr. Askham had finished their consultation, his wife said to him, "Alan, can you recollect any

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of the stories like fairy tales that Charlotte mentions?"

"Really it is so long ago since I heard them that I fear any recital would be as full of holes as the roads in the stories."

CHAPTER II.

ANOTHER LETTER FROM MRS. PAGE.

IT was arranged that when next a letter came the recipient should, after its perusal, read it aloud at the Hall. And when a letter arrived for Mr. Dale from his sister, in answer to his questions, on the next meeting of the friends at the Hall he read it out as follows :—

“ MY DEAR ALAN,

“ I will try to answer your questions. I kept a rough copy of my former letter, and on looking it over I found I could add a few particulars, which, though not much in themselves, may help your investigations concerning the Becklea family. But why do you so studiously avoid telling me what is really the motive for your inquiries ? ”

Mr. Dale paused, and observed, “ I purposely do not say *why* I make the inquiries, that her

mind may be thoroughly unbiassed." He then continued :—

"The Lady Ann's name was 'Ann Caroline Editha,' and I have it written in full by herself, in a little book she gave my mother on her birthday."

"I should like to see that book," said Mr. Askham.

"We will ask for it," said Mr. Dale, and continued the letter :—"The name of Ann was her mother's; Caroline, her grandmother's; and Editha that of the aunt Lady Editha, so remarkable for her virtues. Her mother (her father's first wife) was Ann Sophia, daughter of Conrad Godwin, Esq., of Hilderbury House, Essex. Do you not remember the tablet to her memory just opposite our pew in church? How often I have read it. And Letitia's name was also there. She died when her two little girls, Letitia Sophia, and Ann Caroline Editha, were quite children. Their father married, secondly, Emily, daughter of Mr. Beverly of Bromsborough Park. She survived her husband, and was the kind excellent stepmother to the girls whom I mentioned before. I never heard that the Lystones

were connected or related to either of the families before Ann's extraordinary marriage with John Lystone. He was the grandson of old Dr. Lystone, rector of Eddishowe, who was also chaplain to Earl Charles, and passed the greatest part of his time at Becklea Park, being likewise the librarian ; but report said that his learning was not so deep as his potations ! However, he was a man with a ready wit, and was said to be useful to the Earl as well as a good companion. He lived to a great age, surviving the Earl a few years. My father knew him and his sons and daughters very well, but his wife had been long dead. John Lystone, who married Ann Thurlestane, was the son of his son Joseph, who lived in London : that was all we heard or knew of him. When Dr. Lystone died the family found that they were penniless, through their father's extravagance, although the living, which was the Becklea family living, was a rich one, and he had his large salary from the Earl in addition. They all dispersed, and we heard no more of them till Ann married ; and even then for some time, no one knew whom she

had run off with, so determined was her father that the name should not be mentioned. But, as I said in my former letter, she was received back at last, as Mrs. John Lystone. On the day she was of age her father had given her all her mother's fortune ; and that was all she had to live on after her marriage, for John Lystone had not a penny of his own but what he earned, and we could never for certain hear what his profession was—everything was kept so secret. He never came to Eddishowe as a guest, either before his marriage or with his wife, Ann ; nor did I ever hear where they first met. Mr. Thurlestane did not live long after Ann's marriage ; it embittered his life, and it was thought hastened his death. He was never again the cheerful man he had been, and seemed to avoid even his old friends. At his death the living had of course to be given up, and Mrs. Thurlestane also left Eddishowe, and we quite lost sight of them. Besides, I was myself married and gone away. The Earl gave the living to one of his scientific and learned, friends. It was supposed that the want of position and means, but principally the former,

was the cause of the dislike to Ann's marriage, but nothing was ever said about it in any way. And another reason, no doubt, for John Lystone's non-admittance into the family was the dislike, I may almost say *abhorrence*, in which his grandfather, the old doctor, was held by all members of the Becklea family; they remembered his insolence to the old Earl and to them during the time he ruled supreme at Becklea. He got drunk most nights, and then his insolence exceeded all bounds; he swore at the guests, the servants, and everybody else, except the Earl and Countess, and was carried off to bed roaring and blustering, not able to walk. The Earl, though much offended with this behaviour, always forgave him when he next appeared in pretended penitence; but this soon wore off, and he resumed his usual insolence. His honesty, too, was doubted concerning a certain Welsh manuscript of some value that was brought into the family by a Welsh lady, the wife of Sir William Thurlestane, of some generations back. When inquired for one day it was not to be found, although it had been

shown to a visitor not long before, who had discussed its value at some length. Dr. Lystone never had a penny in his pocket, notwithstanding his large income. But how his money went no one could imagine, for he had no visible extravagances, and kept his family in very poor style. Some suspected he gambled, and, it is said, not without reason. A more obnoxious person in a family could hardly be found; yet the Earl could not, or fancied he could not, live without him, and, it was credibly asserted, lived in *fear* of him.

"This being the feeling of the family towards the Lystones, even if Ann had required some assistance when her own small fortune became inadequate for her maintenance, she could hardly have expected to get it from her own family, who considered she had disgraced them and herself by her marriage. Her uncle, Earl Oswy, was a book-worm, closeted in his library from morning to night, and caring for nothing else, and for nobody but the scientific friends who occasionally went to stay with him. So Ann could have no hope of assistance from him if she

wanted it after her father's death ; and from the last Earl, as we knew, it was even more hopeless. Imagine the difference to Ann after her marriage with this poor man ! Her personal appearance even betokened her altered circumstances. No longer a dainty lady in her coach and four, with grand dress and liveried servants at her beck and call, as when she lived at her grandfather's house ; nor even as in the affluence of her father's house ! Yet in her now more moderate sphere, she still kept up her dignity of manner as before. We all remarked how changed was her appearance ; and although she did not look unhappy, there was a sadness over her former smiling, though perhaps rather haughty, face that we were sorry to see. There was a distance too, and a coldness between her and her old acquaintances which could not be got over, arising from the existence of a subject that could not be alluded to.

" I said in my former letter that the site of Becklea Park could no longer be traced. I was wrong, however, for there was the handsome stone bridge over the Stonybeck, that rushing,

impetuous stream which ran through the estate, broad and shallow in summer, full of trout, and a foaming torrent in bad weather, with trees and shrubs growing on its banks on one or both sides. Oh, how happy we used to be on our summer fishing excursions along this picturesque stream ! The bridge afterwards looked most out of place—a handsome road leading no where ! Also there were those substantial almshouses built by the Lady Gwendoline, wife of Earl Charles, for the old servants of the family, whether widows, single women, or old married couples—six houses in a row. They were almost always occupied, and when the last Earl died there were still an old couple and a single woman there. There was no endowment with these almshouses ; but the Earl, whoever he might be, was to pay the annuity of ten guineas to each of the occupants, with an allowance of firing and candles, and a full dress every year, except a cloak, which was to last two years ; the fashion of the dress, both for women and men, was to be kept up as at the time of its institution. When the property

was sold and destroyed, the last Earl's creditors behaved so far well that they took upon themselves to keep up the almshouses as long as the three old inhabitants should live. The houses not occupied by them were let to labourers, and as the old people died off their habitations were let to other labourers, and finally the six houses were sold, and were left standing, the only other evidence to show where the park once was. They were built just outside one of the gates, at the bottom of the avenue of lime trees, long since cut down. Beyond these two landmarks, I question if any one would be able to discover the different localities in what was once the park—house and gardens destroyed, the whole made open fields. Sad, sad, to those who remember it in its good old state !

“I cannot tell you more about the Countess Gwendoline than that she was the daughter and heiress of the last Duke of St. Ives, of Pendlebury Castle and Gogmagog Towers, in Cornwall. I think her mother was one of the Pendarves family, but I am not sure. It is a long time since I saw the monument to her

memory, on which was engraved, in the good old style, her name and parentage, as well as that of her husband. I believe all the estates in Cornwall had been let for many years, and remained so till they were sold by the last Earl."

At the close of the reading Mr. Askham remarked, "We may find this a most useful letter; but still we hear nothing of 'Mother Pendle.'"

"We seem to have come to the end of Charlotte's knowledge. Where else can we look for information?"

"You must search in York, George," said Mrs. Askham, "in Monk Street."

"It is like groping in the dark at present," said Mr. Dale.

"A person like 'Ann' cannot," said Mr. Askham, "be lost, or have died so completely out of everybody's recollection. How about the Lystones you remember, Dale; are they all dead and gone? Surely not."

"Those I remember were very unpleasant people, and I never had any personal communication with them. However, I can write to the

widow of my old tutor and ask what she can tell me. It was whilst I was with them that I heard of the Lystones, who were always at war with poor old Fellowes, my tutor, about law-suits."

"Where did your tutor live?"

"At Woolstown—he had the small living; and his widow still lived in the village a short time ago."

"It is very hard upon Mrs. Page to have to write such long letters," said Mrs. Askham.

"She was always a scribbler, and a great talker," said Mr. Dale, "and I verily believe these letters will be a pleasure to her."

"I am glad of that. And do you not think it would be well to ask for a description of the dress of the old women of the almshouses?" asked Mrs. Askham.

"Excellent," replied Mr. Dale; "we will put that down for the next letter."

"Also," interposed Mrs. Dale, "if there is any likeness of 'Ann;' there is none, you say, amongst the miniatures."

"Certainly; and also where the monument

was to Earl Charles and his countess," said Mr. Dale.

"And 'Ann's' personal appearance," said Mrs. Askham.

"Most necessary," said Mr. Askham. "How was it we did not think of that before?" Then after a pause he added, "It is impossible she can have died so completely out of every one's sight and recollection, for, keep yourself as quiet as you may, some one is sure to know all about you."

"Perhaps she lived abroad, George, the greater part of her life."

"How did she get here, I should like to know?" said Mr. Askham, as if to himself.

"Who, George? what are you thinking of?"

"Mother Pendle, and what made her come here. My father let the cottage to her, and I never heard of her till after his death, for he only lived a few days after my arrival, summoned with all haste to come to him before he died. He might have known something of her."

“Thwaites, who has been here so many years, may know.”

“No; I asked him. He said the key of the cottage was left at the post office at her desire, and he never thought anything more about her.”

CHAPTER III.

JEFFREY.

A FEW years had passed, and the boys at Woodnaston Hall and the Rectory were home for the summer holidays. Tom Cavendish and Charles Stapylton were also on a visit at the Hall; the former was nephew to the Misses Cavendish, the latter the son of a brother officer of Mr. Askham's, who was abroad with his regiment. Of these four boys, Charles Stapylton was the oldest, and Frank Askham, Mr. Askham's eldest son, the youngest; his brother Roger was not yet sent to school. "Go back to the nursery," Frank said, when he attempted to join in their games; "you are too small."

Of this merry party, Jeffrey Dale was by tacit consent looked up to as leader, and all games lacked spirit when he was absent; which, however, was not often, for he was every day and all day long at the Hall, when he could be

spared from home. They would meet, too, at the Rectory, and on the days when Mr. Dale took his beagles out for exercise, they followed him and his beagles with leaping-poles across country.

After a few runs Charles Stapylton was laid up with a badly-sprained ankle; and Frank Askham came home one day with a cut and bruised face, which greatly vexed his mother.

Tom Cavendish, who was often on a visit to his aunts the Misses Cavendish, and Jeffrey Dale were adepts with their poles. "It is quite as good as riding," they said, "and more fun."

Georgiana, eldest of Mr. Askham's daughters—the "irrepressible Georgie," as her mother called her—lamented greatly that she was not a boy when she saw them all starting off for the hunt.

"How nice it must be," she said, having once tried a leap with a pole over a very small ditch, and enjoyed the fun.

"What a tomboy you are, Georgie," said Frank; "it's not a fit thing for girls to do. You had better go and play with your dolls."

Dolls, however, and even books and work, were not at all to her taste. Riding, running, dancing, any active employment, suited her much better, and “tomboy,” as her brother called her, was, it must be confessed, her most fitting simile. But she was a good-tempered girl, and a general favourite.

“She will settle down some day, you’ll see, and be none the worse,” said Charles Stapylton, who always took her part; and she proved his words to be true in some degree by her gentleness and care for him when he was laid up on the sofa with his sprained ankle. But when he got better she began to feel the restraint, and said to him, “You won’t mind Lucy staying with you for half an hour, will you? I must go and have a run in the park.”

Exercising the beagles in the summer took place from six to eight o’clock in the morning. It was the fashion of the day to rise early; the rest of the day was frequently passed in the gardens. Boys and girls with Miss Carter, the governess, all assembled in the shade on the lawn, and there it was that Jeffrey practised his cross-examinations.

"What do you do at school, Jeff?" asked Georgie; "do the boys put up with your questions?"

"Ha, ha, ha," laughed Tom Cavendish; "you should see him. He doesn't catch me very often; but any poor fellow who is not up to him! you should see, Miss Carter, how he's turned inside out with Jeff's questions, till the fellow can't stand it any longer, and lots of fellows all listening, and bursting with laughter to see Jeff hard at it, so grave, and puzzling the other fellow; so he's called 'the judge.'"

"Why did you let the poor boy be so tormented, Tom?" asked Georgie. "It's too bad, Jeff."

"Oh," answered Jeff, "don't pity the fellows, they got on very well; it's good for them; I only puzzle them a little."

"What is the good of puzzling them?" said Georgie.

"It makes them think. You can't imagine how they improve, Miss Carter, after a little while."

"Improve!" said Georgie; "how can it improve them to be worried and teased?"

"Oh, I don't worry and tease them ; if I see a poor little chap hasn't the pluck to stand it, I let him off easy, as I should you, Georgie." ("H-m," interposed Georgie, with a toss of the head.) "But depend upon it, it does them good, Miss Carter."

"In what way?" she asked.

"Why, I can get a straightforward answer to anything I ask ; after a little while they don't think of beating about the bush to me."

"Then you are an excellent disciplinarian," she answered.

"Oh, don't flatter him, Miss Carter, he is vain enough already," said Georgie.

"Nay, but Jeffrey is not vain, neither has he any self-love."

"Ah, but don't think he has many under his control, Miss Carter ; it does not suit every one," put in Frank. "And he knows it, though he does sit there laughing."

"Nor does it suit me either," said Jeffrey, "Some are not worth the trouble."

"Trouble!" exclaimed Georgie ; "what trouble can it be to you? it is what you like."

"Well, I suppose I do," replied Jeff ; "but it

is a trouble for all that, for I have to think for them and myself too."

"Nonsense," said Georgie.

"Well, just try it."

"I would not take the trouble," she vowed.

"So then you allow it is a trouble?"

"It's no trouble to you; it is all you can do."

"Ha, ha," said Tom Cavendish, laughing; "he gets more than his match sometimes, though. You should see, Miss Carter, how he gets rolled over."

"How rolled over?" inquired Miss Carter.

"Why, of course there are many fellows cleverer than he——"

"Who said I was clever?" interposed Jeffrey.

"Well, you are not altogether stupid," said Tom.

"Thank you," said Jeff, and they all shouted with laughter.

"But what about this rolling over," asked Miss Carter; "how was that accomplished?"

"Well, you know——"

"I do not know yet," she said.

"Well, you will presently."

"Go on," said Jeff; "I want to hear it."

"He is so vain," continued Georgie, "he likes to hear about himself."

"Well, I do," said he; "I like to know how a thing looks to other people."

"I see we shall have to go in to tea without this story, unless you make haste," said Miss Carter, looking at her watch.

"But how did it happen?" said Georgie.

"It," said Charles Stapylton, "if you mean the rolling over, did not happen at all. It is not worth hearing, Miss Carter; it is the greatest trash; don't listen to it."

"What was it?" said Georgie.

"It was merely a question of words," he continued, "chop-logic, as it is called, and Dale was not up to it, and he got the worst of the argument. It is not worth repeating. Pray let us finish this talk."

"No, no," said Tom Cavendish and Frank; "we will have Jeff down on his marrow-bones."

"Well, so you shall," said Jeff, "but not now."

Come along, Mary," he added, going off with her. The rest followed into the house; Charles Stapylton, Georgie, and Miss Carter in close conversation, Frank helping Lucy to carry the dolls and the work-boxes, and Tom bringing up the rear.

CHAPTER IV.

INQUIRIES AT ULSFORD.

MR. ASKHAM and Mr. Dale went to Ulsford to make inquiries concerning Mother Pendle's visits there. They considered the post office the most likely place to hear of her antecedents ; but when the postmaster was interrogated, he could recollect nothing beyond her occasional calling for letters on market-days. He could not remember how long ago it was since she last went there, but it must have been some years back. He recollects her quite well ; he thought he never could forget "such a extrorney figure," so old-fashioned ; she put him in mind of "Mother Bunch" in the fairy tale. She was like a fairy too, "being so pertickler fine in her ways." She had to sign a paper sometimes, and she would examine the pen to see if it was good before she wrote.

"What did she write ?" asked Mr. Askham.

"She had to sign her name," said the postmaster.

"What name?"

"The name as was on the post packet—'Ann Pendle, Ulsford.' I can never forget her," continued the man. "Why her clogs weren't no bigger than a bairn's, and never a speck o' dirt would you see on 'em, the dirtiest days; she didn't seem to touch the ground. You'd see women go splash-dash in the puddles and mud and be spattered all over on market-days, but this little old 'ooman would pick her way over the same place and come out as clean as a penny. Lors, how often we've watched her! By her ways you'd have said it was a duchess walking along, let alone that poor little widder. But, sir, I can't tell you who she was beyond the name she had, nor where she come from, beyond the carrier's cart from Woodnaston, where we see her seated. That carrier's dead now."

"Yes," said Mr. Askham, "he is, unfortunately, or he might perhaps have helped us in our inquiries."

"She lodged at one time, sir, at the 'Travel-

ler's Rest.' Ned Staples, who kep' it then, was quite doited about her, and used to talk and say she said she had lived in great houses, but they couldn't get her to say no more. Sally Staples, his wife, used to talk of her without ceasing, and used to say it was her *conquisted* notion,—You know, sir," he said, turning to Mr. Dale, "she was always fond of grand words, was Sally,—so she said it was her conquered notion that this old leddy,—by dad! she was like a leddy a'most,—that she was an upper servant of some sort in a grand house. And one afternoon, when she was sitting in the bar without Sally, Dick the 'os'ler came to the winder, and said, 'Tip us a pipe, old 'ooman.' Dick's a bit of a wag, you know, sir, and has been London-ways, and so takes liberties o' times. 'Tip us a pipe,' says he; and the old mother turned away with the airs of a queen. 'Come,' says Dick, 'ye needn't be so contrary, I didn't ax ye for a buss;' at which the old leddy got up as if she'd been shot, and went over to the other side of the room. Sally come in, and heard him. 'None of your imperence, Dick,' says she; 'ye're just to treat my jists as

proper sort o' people, as they is, so go your ways: Here, take a pipe and behave yourself.' 'What the dickens, missis,' says Dick, 'now; can't a feller have a bit o' fun?' 'That's no fun, a-swaggering like that,' says Sally; 'and here's some backy for ye,' says she, with a sweet face; for ye know, sir, she was mighty 'fraid of losing him, and he took the bis'ness off her when her husband died, and paid her handsome, did Dick. There's a score and more tales about the old dame that no one need forget, they're so pertickler."

"And cannot you at all remember about her first coming here, or how it was she came here?"

"No, sir, for I heard of her being at the 'Traveller's Rest' before she came to me at the post office. I hadn't been long here myself then, I had only come back from the London office a short time, and I took no partickler notice till she came to sign the paper. No, I can't at all say how many years ago that is, but it's a long time; aye, sir, many years. Well, it was before I married I know; aye, I'm pretty certain; and that's above a dozen years."

"What is become of Ned Staples and his wife; are they still alive?"

"No, sir, they are both dead." Then, after a pause, he continued, "There's a many people knew her, sir; but she was that backward in speaking that nobody knew much about her. She never wanted for anything; she'd always plenty of money for her little wants, which wasn't much."

"Was she liked by those who knew her?"

"That she was, sir, and Sally Staples was unkimmom fond of her; she had fine gentle ways wi' her. But she wouldn't allow no liberties wi' her."

"Was any one rude to her?"

"No, sir; but you felt somehow shy before her; she had a way of looking at ye that wasn't like the most of people. I believe what Ned Staples used to say was true—that she'd been used to grand houses, and I think it's a pity she didn't keep to 'em; she wasn't fit for rough life, leastways she didn't look it. And I heard they called her a 'witch' down your way. Is that true, sir?"

"Yes."

“ What was that for, sir ? ”

“ I know no reason, except that she lived and acted differently to other poor people.”

“ Ah, to be sure, sir. She did act different. She couldn’t help it, sir ; it come nat’ral to her. Mr. Craggs was here one day—he was mayor, you know, sir, the year before he died. ‘ Well,’ he said, one day, a-watching her picking her way all amongst the market stuff and mud,—‘ well,’ says he, ‘ that old woman couldn’t do it better if she’d been taught dancing with the first o’ the land.’ I didn’t myself see much o’ dancing in it, but he said she put her foot down so firm and elligant, like she’d be fit to dance.” (Here he went to his desk and took out a pocket-book, in which he searched.) “ Wait a minute, sir ; I’ve got it writ down, I was so afraid of losing the name ; for Mr. Craggs said it was the dance that is danced afore the King and Queen at the Queen’s balls. Ah, here it is. I’d be sorry to lose it. ‘ MINIVENT,’ sir,” he said, raising his voice.

“ The minuet, no doubt.”

“ Very like, sir ; but I never heard tell of it before, and that’s a many years ago now. So I s’pose, sir, they picks up their coats and steps

out like to do it; that's what she was about when he saw her; though I've often thought it was curious the Queen should like that sort of dance. But there's no knowing what them great folks like!"

"Did she often come here?"

"No, sir; I never saw her here but on market-days. I s'pose it was company for her, and she liked it."

"Was there any other place she frequented besides the 'Traveller's Rest'?"

"I don't think so, sir; she was not one to gad about from house to house, and she'd very few words for any one."

"Could you tell her hand-writing if you saw it?"

"No, sir, I can't say I could. I never saw her write more than her name, and that was in a shaky sort of common way."

"Did you never see any letter she had addressed and put into the post?"

"No, sir; if she put any letters into the box I didn't know when; for it was always market-days, when there was often a lot of 'em, and I couldn't tell which was which, and I'd no time

to examine them. Besides, sir, I've no right to do that, unless I suspect some bad ways or fraud, which I never did. So I couldn't have."

"Is there any one living now in Ulsford that she knew?" asked Mr. Dale.

"I don't know, sir; but I should a'most think there isn't, for there have been many deaths of late and changes among the people. And it's now many years since she has been here. Only those who are old inhabitants can remember her, but many know her by hearsay."

"Is she much talked about?"

"Oh yes, sir, tales are often told about her odd ways; she's not like to be forgot. You see the smile come up on the face as soon as her name is mentioned, and those who can tell the most tales are the best welcome," he added, laughing.

Mr. Askham and Mr. Dale then took their leave.

CHAPTER V.

GEORGIE MARRIED.

YEARS passed on: Georgiana Askham was married to Charles Stapylton, her old play-fellow, now a gallant captain of Hussars; she, the “tomboy” of yore, was a handsome, gay, sweet-tempered girl, the joy and delight of her home circle. No “quarters” came amiss to her in following her husband’s career; she found amusement and “some consolation,” as she said, in the very worst. Her faults—who has not faults!—were those one might expect with such buoyant spirits: excessive carelessness, thoughtlessness. The cares of a household were utterly beyond her, and she placed all her trust in her husband’s soldier servant, Lawrence; he was butler, nurse, cook, housekeeper, coachman, courier, all by turns, for nothing came amiss to him. His master had bought his discharge, and he devoted himself to him, and to his

mistress, whom he considered “the cleverest and handsomest lady in the service, and the best company.” Lawrence was everything to her. Were they going away from home—Lawrence was left in charge of the children and household. Were they on their travels—all was done under Lawrence’s direction. Arrived at their destination, he undertook all the arrangements. Everything was done with military precision ; no bustle, no talking. The lady’s-maid and the nurse, the only female servants, at first were inclined to rebel against his rule, but they wisely gave in, and found the benefit of order and regularity.

Lawrence was a tall, fine-looking man, with a very commanding air, and an exceedingly plain, not to say ugly, face ; but his manners were conciliating, and his smile was benevolent. His voice too was pleasant, so that the want of good looks was hardly noticed after the first sight of the blunt, rugged features.

One of his foibles was the love of “drill ;” not for himself, but for others. And the children, as soon as they could walk, whether boys or girls, were all summoned to “drill” each morn-

ing. He had found the benefit of it with his own children, he said, and he followed up the plan with Captain Stapylton's, notwithstanding the remonstrances of the nurse, who, though amused at it at first, could see no use in its continuance.

"How well your children walk," would often be remarked to the nurse by people who met them.

"Well they may!" would be her indignant reply, "when they're kept at goose-step till they're well nigh toppling over."

"Goose-step!"

"Yes; and all the rest of them fads. But they are clever enough at it," she would add, with a pleasant look; "and there's Miss Louisa will do her 'right about face' so pretty, much better than Master George, though she is not so old by two year. Oh, they can go through it all; it's pretty to see them, but I don't see the good of it—only missis is so wrapt up."

"Missis is so wrapt up" was her comment upon anything she could not quite follow.

"What frights the children are dressed, nurse," Lucy remarked, when they came to stay

at Woodnaston during the absence abroad of their parents. "They look as if they had come out of Noah's ark."

The nurse replied, "No wonder, miss, when we are so much in Ireland, where there is nothing to be got but buttermilk. How it is we're not all starved I can't think — everything so bad. Why the flour is so wet and bad it won't hold together; and even Mr. Larrance can't make the little furren cakes master's so fond of with it — they all run about. Well, miss, as I was going to say, no wonder the poor dears is dressed old-fashioned; missis don't see it, she kisses 'em all the same as if they came out of Bond Street in the first style. Master does sometimes say, 'Why, nurse, don't you put on the children's best frocks?' But law bless me, miss, what's the use of best frocks, even if they had 'em, in such an out-of-the-way place as Ireland; and how are we to get 'em? When master and missis take Larrance to Dublin, I say to him, 'Now you go and get some new frocks for the children, and some warm things to keep out the damp of this place;' for you know, miss, it's not so extra cold there as it is

so wet and damp. So Larrance says, ‘How am I to do it?’ I say, ‘Get ’em and take ’em to missis, and she’ll say if they are the right sort ; and get ’em new-fashioned.’ Well, miss, and what’s the use of my saying that! he hasn’t a bit of taste, and he goes and gets ’em all straight down cut ‘regerlation’ fashion, as he calls it; so ugly. He says he likes to see things neat; so do I, so does missis, and any one ; but you may see yourself, miss, they ain’t neat—they are ugly. I wish, miss, you would go and buy something proper for them. Missis is very good, she doesn’t grudge the expense ; but she’s so wrapt up, she can’t attend to it herself. But I am sure she would like to see the poor dears look pretty—not but what they are pretty whatever they have on. Now, Miss Lucy, you will get ’em some frocks when you go to York, won’t you ?”

“ I will ask their mamma. Who teaches them ? George can read pretty well.”

“ Missis has ’em for an hour every morning ; that’s as much as she can do, for if she’s well enough, which she mostly is, there’s plenty of riding and driving to employ her. I don’t think

master likes to go anywhere without her ; and no wonder, she is so merry and such good company. Wherever she goes you hear her voice. And we do miss her so when she's away for a day or two."

" An hour a day would not bring them on so well."

" Well, miss, Larrance takes them after ; he's a very good scholard, and he teaches them to write and do a sum. Master George is very clever at that. And when Larrance goes with master and missis I take 'em, so they get taught. But it's their clo'es, miss, that want looking after more than their learning. Larrance isn't tasty. He wants it all to be regerlation."

" Why do they have such dark-coloured sashes ? "

" Well, miss, that's regerlation. Larrance says they should have the colours of the regiment, but I say the young ladies should have pretty light colours ; so he goes to Dublin, and when he comes back he's brought a whole roll of yellow ribbin." (Lucy laughed.) "' What on earth is that for ? ' says I. ' For the little ladies'

frocks,' says he. So I dress up the baby and Miss Louisa with it, and when missis sees the baby she laughs outright, and says she won't have the baby tied up in yellow. So she takes the baby and kisses and hugs it, and tears off the yellow ribbins, and puts them in the fire, and Miss Louisa's too."

Lucy was highly amused.

"But why did he get yellow ribbons?"

"Oh, miss, it's regerlation, imitating the gold; but we don't want gold of that sort."

"Well, and what did he get instead?"

"So, miss, we had no ribbins but the old red and blue till he went again to Dublin, and there, as luck would have it, he saw some very pretty ribbin they called 'Waterloo blue.' This was some sort o' regerlation, he thought, and he got a roll of it, and it was a nice change from the dark black-sort-of-blue; but pink ribbins I couldn't get no ways. He will let 'em wear coral beads as much as we like, because they are red; and Missis got a gold chain with a gold heart hanging for a necklace for Miss Louisa, and one for the baby too, and he liked 'em to wear 'em."

"I thought, nurse, George had nice curly hair when he was a baby?"

"Yes, miss, so he had, and it hung in large long curls, and master and missis admired it. But Larrance thought he was getting too big for that—it wasn't regerlation—so one day he had 'em cut off. And wasn't I angry! and wasn't missis vexed! but she laughed so at Larrance's explanation that she couldn't scold, but she said she'd have it grow again; but it never curled so beautiful after; and missis is so wrapt up! So Larrance has kep' it cut pretty near regerlation ever since."

"If you are going out this morning you must wrap up the children, nurse, for it is a keen air."

"Law bless you, miss! they haven't got any wraps. Larrance says it's not wholesome to wrap up so; he likes to see the children, he says, 'in light marching order.' (Lucy was highly amused.) "And if they are cold they must run about and keep themselves warm; he doesn't hold for so much wrapping up, he says they must be hardy. What will Master George do, he says, when he goes into the army and has to camp out if he's not made hardy? And the young ladies,

he says, shall be delicately treated as young ladies when they're too old to run about, but it's better for 'em to be hardy now. And it don't much signify in Ireland, for it's not so bitter cold there in winter, nor so scorching hot in summer ; but here they will want warm clothing, so please, Miss Lucy, will you order some for 'em before Larrance comes."

"But suppose they should not be 'regulation cut'?" said Lucy, laughing.

"Ah, well, miss, that won't signify. Missis is so wrapt up, she's sure to be pleased. And as to Larrance, he's bound to be pleased with what you do."

"Are the children fond of him?"

"They are indeed, miss. He takes 'em up, Master George on one arm, Miss Louisa on the other, and they kiss his ugly brown face as if it was as pretty as their mamma's. You'll see, miss, when he comes they'll stand at 'attention' of their own accord when they see him, and he salutes ; then they'll run into his arms. 'Dear Lorry, dear Lorry,' they'll cry, and kiss him over and over again. Oh, he's very good to 'em. And I don't know what we should do without him,

though he is so fond of regerlation—it don't hurt anybody. You should see Master George ride ; but you haven't a proper pony here."

"There is the little brown pony."

"Larrance wouldn't let him ride that."

"Why not? it is very quiet."

"He won't let him ride any but his own, and that's a little lean-looking, narrow-backed Welsh pony, and so I suppose it is easier for him to ride, for Larrance only puts a bridle in his mouth, no saddle, no stirrups, and he's made him ride beautiful, so upright, like any little soldier. He says it's regerlation ; and it certainly does make 'em ride well."

CHAPTER VI.

JEFFREY'S APPEAL TO MR. ASKHAM.

WHEN Mr. and Mrs. Askham were in the library one morning, they saw Jeffrey Dale pass the window in a hurried manner. Mr. Askham made a sign to him to come in, but he did not appear for some time after, and when he at last entered the room he was not in his usual merry mood.

"Why, Jeff, my boy, what is the matter with you?" said Mr. Askham.

"Surely," added Mrs. Askham, "something has happened. What is it?"

But he did not answer.

"Are all well at home?"

"Oh yes, sir, there is nothing the matter with them."

Here Mrs. Askham went out through the window, much to Jeffrey's relief.

"What is it then? Have you thrown down

my best pony?" inquired Mr. Askham, smiling, for Jeff was an excellent horseman.

"No, sir—but—but—"

"But what?"

"You have always received me as one that belonged to you—and—and—"

"Well, come, is that anything to be so doleful about? Why, Jeff, what is the matter?"

Then with many stammerings and stutterings, quite foreign to his usual way of speaking, he partly told his tale of love.

"What," said Mr. Askham, "have you fallen in love with the cook, that you are so ashamed?"

"No, sir—but—Mary and I—"

"What Mary? The gamekeeper's daughter?"

Then a stream of eloquent language of love burst from his lips.

"What *my* Mary; my little girl? Why, Jeff, she is scarcely out of the school-room." And Mr. Askham laughed. "Tush! why she is but a child! What does she say to it?"

"We have loved each other all our lives."

"She is too young. I cannot part with all my children; I shall not have one left."

"We can wait, if you will only give your consent."

"Consent! consent! What, to part with my child? I must hear what she says."

Still Jeffrey went on pleading. He could work for her. He knew he should succeed if he had the promise of her love. (The old, old tale!)

"Why, Jeff, you are quite eloquent to-day. Go and fetch Mary; and do not let me see you look so distracted."

A few hurried strides took Jeffrey to the door. "Mary," he cried; and she, shy little puss, shortly appeared.

"Come along, Mary," he said, and drawing her arm within his, they walked up to her father.

"Mary, my dear," Mr. Askham said, "what is this I hear about you? Jeffrey says you want to leave us—or he wishes to take you away with him. Can you leave us?"

But there was no answer. Mary clung to Jeffrey, and blushed deeply, with her eyes cast down.

"Speak, Mary," said Jeffrey. "Will you be my wife, my own dear wife?"

She nestled her head against his waistcoat and put her left hand on his shoulder, looking up into his face. "Yes," was all she could whisper.

"Do you love him better than me, Mary?" said her father, smiling.

"Yes, papa—no, papa——"

"Sir, she is mine, is she not?" said Jeffrey. "She is the only girl that ever understood me. Mary, plead for me. Is she not mine, sir?"

"God bless you both, my children," said Mr. Askham, taking their hands in his. "Jeff, you have always been as one of my sons, and you will truly be one henceforth. But I cannot part with Mary yet; she is scarcely out of the school-room."

"Oh yes, papa. Miss Carter left three months ago!"

"Three months is a lifetime, no doubt, at your age, child. Go and fetch your mother; we will hear what she says about it."

"I will go, sir," said Jeff. Very soon he returned with Mrs. Askham.

Mary ran into her mother's arms. Jeff had told his story on the way.

"Mary says she loves that blustering barrister

better than she does me," said Mr. Askham.
"Louisa, can you believe it?"

"Oh yes, in a way; and better than she does any one. Is it not so, Mary?"

"Yes, dear mamma." And the girl burst into tears.

Jeffrey took her in his arms. "Give us your blessing, sir," he said.

"And you, dear mamma."

"God bless you both, our dear children."

After a short time Jeffrey declared he must go to the Rectory. "Come along, Mary," he said as usual, "you and I no more do part."

"Ah!" said Mr. Askham, "and some one else will come and rob me of my Lucy!"

"We should not regret their happiness," said his wife; "but I hope Lucy will still remain to us for some time."

CHAPTER VII.

CWM CASTLE.

MR. ASKHAM's health had greatly failed, and there was the settled melancholy in his face which had never entirely left it since his accident, whilst the sharp pain in the shoulder was constantly felt. "Ah!" he would say, with a sigh, at such a moment, and would look far away into the distance. His medical man advised change of scene for him, so Mr. and Mrs. Askham and Lucy set off to visit their relations in Wales. Mary was left at the Rectory, she being engaged to be married to Jeffrey Dale, the rising young barrister.

Mr. Llewellyn and his brother, Colonel Ivor Llewellyn, who lived together in their ancestral home Cwm Castle, were cousins of Mr. and Mrs. Askham, on his mother's and her father's side, thus they were doubly connected. Mrs. Askham

had not been at the Castle for many years, and her husband had never been in Wales.

They travelled in their own carriage, stopping, as usual in those days, to visit friends on the road, which, if making it a long journey in point of time, shortened the fatigue, and added much to their enjoyment.

Their reception at Cwm Castle was most joyous. The two old gentlemen rode to the park gate to meet them, where they were greeted by Welsh harpers playing the national tunes. A flag was flying on the tower of the Castle, and a very small cannon was fired in their honour in front of the tower. The Colonel laughed when Lucy looked aghast at the unexpected explosion, and said it was his greeting to Lucy, and begged she would not be alarmed.

It was a fine autumn day, and the tints were rich on the foliage, heightened by the crimson glow of the setting sun.

“This is a charming place,” said Mr. Askham.

“It is lovely,” said Lucy.

The hills in the distance gave to the park an appearance of space seemingly unlimited. The fine oaks were so placed as to be shown to the

greatest advantage, whilst adding beauty to the scene, in which the small lake was not the least attractive feature. Beyond, on one side of the park, was a wood which crept up a steep slope, and at its foot was a river, which, however, could not be seen from the castle.

"Not a leaf seems altered, dear Owaine, since I was here as a girl," said Mrs. Askham to Mr. Llewellyn.

"We do not like change," he answered. "And I believe Ivor will let things remain much as they are when I am gone."

Many of the old servants were still there, others had passed away, lamented by their masters. The housekeeper, whom Mrs. Askham remembered as her aunt's "tire-woman," was overjoyed to see her again.

"Sure, ma'am, and you do look well!" she said. "And is that Miss Lucy? The colonel has made many preparations for her pleasure. He is afraid she will find it so dull. It is something strange to see a young lady at the Castle now, ma'am. So different to what it used to be in my dear lady's time, and when you were young!"

"I am glad to see your masters look so well," replied Mrs. Askham.

"Yes, ma'am, thank God! they are well and hearty, and the Colonel none the worse for being in the wars."

The dinner-bell rang.

"It's the quarter bell, ma'am, but you will please excuse me now. I can't dress you for dinner as I used to do. I am housekeeper now. I have put Miss Lucy into the pink room close by, ma'am."

"My old room," said Mrs. Askham, and she passed with Lucy into it.

The evening passed very pleasantly, the old gentlemen having many reminiscences to talk over with Mrs. Askham.

It was settled that Lucy, according to an old Welsh custom, should call the cousins of her parents "Uncle."

Days and weeks passed evenly and merrily, and Mr. Askham regained his cheerfulness. To Lucy it was a time of unmixed happiness; she loved to roam about the grounds, and the wood seen from the Castle became her favourite walk. The prettiest spot in the wood was nearly two

miles from the Castle. At this point a headland projected towards the river, which ran with rapid and widened course at its foot, divided from it only by a narrow strip of grass. The cliff was steep, but not perpendicular, and down its rugged sides, which were thickly wooded to the base, large rocks cropped out. But whilst the wood clothed the sloping sides of the cliff, stretching without break to the Castle, at the summit of the headland fields took its place. Lucy, therefore, on gaining the headland on her way to her favourite resort, had to walk for a short distance along the open cart road till she came to a wicket in the stone wall. From this a path led down the side of the cliff to the open space, a little distance below, where the cave was situated, from which point there was an extensive and beautiful view. The trees in the vicinity were lopped to allow the distant hills, the rushing river, and the fields below to be seen. On one of the hills was an old fortress and watch-tower in ruins, but still presenting an imposing appearance in the distance. A stone seat was cut in the cave, and it was here that Lucy brought her book or her drawing, and delighted to pass some

time in the morning, with the sun brightly shining on the landscape before her.

One morning she had gone to her favourite cave, and sat reading, absorbed in her book, when she was startled by the sound of a horn. She speedily went to the rail at the edge of the little platform in front, and saw horsemen and hounds in the fields below ; some were crossing the river, others galloping in the fields, and the huntsmen and hounds by the river-side. She stood watching them for a few seconds,—the whole scene was attractive and beautiful,—when to her utter surprise, after a slight motion amongst the shrubs down the cliff, a fine fox rose up before her, his eyes so bright, his tongue out, and panting audibly. He little heeded her, but leisurely came through the open fence and trotted off up the path. Not many seconds after appeared first one hound, and then a second ; they took precisely the same route up the path, and they, too, were soon out of sight. Lucy ran up the path also to watch them, and to her astonishment and dismay, when she got to the wicket, she found half a dozen or more gentlemen of the hunt on horse-

back waiting at it. She was quite out of breath and startled. She said to the gentleman nearest the wicket, "Did you see the fox?"

"No; which way did he go?"

"He came up this path from the river, followed by two hounds—and there they go," she said, pointing to a field behind the gentlemen; who at once rode off, shouting "Tally ho!"

Lucy stood and watched them, but they were soon lost to sight; then she returned to the cave, but nothing was to be seen of the rest of the hunters and hounds, and the horn each moment sounded more and more faintly and distant. After a time she returned to the Castle and related her adventure.

"Why you silly little puss," said the Colonel, "you should have shouted 'Tally ho!' when you saw the fox."

"But, uncle, I was all alone, and I was so startled and frightened when I saw all those gentlemen on horseback round the wicket."

"Who were they, my child?"

"I do not know; and I could not look at them."

“ Whom did you speak to ? ”

“ I do not know ; but he was the nearest to the wicket.”

“ What was he like ? Was he young or old ? ”

“ He took off his hat, and I saw he was young ; he was tall too and thin, and had on a red coat.”

“ H’m,” said the Colonel. “ And who were there besides ; there were not many young men I suppose ? ”

“ I do not know. They all took off their hats to me, and I saw one was an oldish gentleman with a high colour and grey hair, who looked so good-natured. He had on a red coat too ; they had almost all red coats.”

“ That was Colonel Lewis of Pentremoyle, an excellent companion and sportsman. You will see him here. But how about the rest ? ”

“ I really cannot tell you, uncle ; it was but a glance that I had, and they are all strangers to me. They jumped the low wall, and were soon out of sight. Poor Reynard ! ” she continued. “ He was so beautiful ! I never saw more lovely eyes, so large and clear and bright, his teeth so

white, and his brush so full and handsome. His legs were very muddy, and one pad looked torn ; there was a little mark of blood on a stone he had stepped upon.”

“ A most circumstantial account, child ; and, considering that the whole affair from beginning to end did not occupy, probably, so long a time as it has taken us to discuss it, it speaks well for your observation.”

Lucy often went to the cave afterwards, but she never saw the huntsmen and hounds there again.

One day when the Colonel accompanied her he took her to a point, a few yards distant from the cave, jutting out from the cliff, from which the ruined fortress on the opposite distant hill could be best seen.

“ This,” said he, “ is called ‘ the Lover’s Leap,’ but is wrongly named.”

“ Why, uncle ? ”

“ The story is this. A young girl, Mary Williams, and her lover, John Evans, were accustomed to come here on Sundays and holidays for their walk—in fact it was a general resort on these occasions. Their courtship had been of

long standing; the lover, however, was jealous, and proved unfaithful as well. A village coquette had enticed him away from his old love, and the latter was duly pitied by all the neighbours on account of her lover's neglect. A young miller took her case exceedingly to heart; he had long silently compassionated her, and at last, when the neglect was but too apparent, he accused Evans of it, and a quarrel ensued. Not only did Evans quarrel with the young miller, but with Mary herself. He told the miller he never should have her, even if he did not marry her himself. At last a reconciliation took place between Evans and Mary, and apparently all went on well again. A harvest-home was to be celebrated with the usual dance at the village inn. Never had the lovers appeared so completely united. One Sunday evening they took their walk as usual, and remained late, much later than others who were there. Evans returned to the farm where he worked at the usual time, and betook himself to rest. Mary had not returned to her home; nobody had seen her, no one knew anything about her. Search and inquiry were made to no purpose, and Evans suggested she was gone

to a relative at a little distance ; and so the matter dropped.

“ The night of the harvest-home dance arrived. Mary came early, and no one was surprised to see her. She came alone, and no one took any notice. Presently came Evans with his new love upon his arm. He walked into the room in a jaunty manner, with a joke and a laugh for each one he met, till he suddenly stood transfix'd ; he gave a wild shriek, and looked scared like a madman, when he saw Mary standing before him in her usual good health, and her best dress.

“ ‘ Ah, ye villain ! ’ said she, ‘ so ye thought to murder me, did ye ? but here I am safe and well, and am well quit of ye for ever.’

“ Evans was so utterly appalled by seeing her ‘ ghost,’ as he muttered to himself, that he stood shaking, trembling, and chattering his teeth, without being able to utter another word. A universal hubbub ensued. Mary told how, in forcing her to stand at the very edge of the projecting point near the cave, the better to see the distant fortress, whilst promising to take her a trip to see ‘ the wonders of yonder old ruin,’ he gave her a very hard push, and she

fell over! It was late; they had been alone there for some time. No assistance was to be got; she shrieked to him for help, but no answer came. Fortunately she was caught in a tree, and was supported by its branches, or she must have fallen on the rocks further down, perhaps into the river, which ran close at the foot, and was very full at the time. She managed to extricate herself from the tree after a while; the moon shone brightly, and she scrambled down, and at last arrived, lame from a sprained ankle, and her arm bleeding, at the nearest house, that of the young miller's mother. She was kindly received, and at her own request hidden there till it was time to appear at the village dance.

“Evans, it is said, never quite recovered his reason after the shock of seeing her alive when he hoped she was dead, and nothing would induce him to go near the rock again.”

“And what became of Mary?” asked Lucy.

“She eventually married the miller.”

“Do you think, uncle, this is true?”

“It is said to be so. Come and look at the spot. Some of the underwood has been cut

away, so that you can look down with ease. I will hold you ; do not fear."

Lucy looked down, and expressed her disbelief of the story. No one, she declared, could escape with life who should fall down a place so steep, and so covered with jagged rocks.

"Remember, the girl was in a state of terror and desperation, when strength often becomes almost superhuman," said the Colonel.

"How long ago was it ?" asked Lucy.

"I never heard a date given to the story ; but when I was a lad I used to hear people say their mothers remembered Mary Williams, and that she lived to be an old woman, for she was not seriously hurt by the fall."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PICTURE GALLERY.

On their return to the Castle, as they walked along the gallery, Lucy asked Colonel Llewellyn to tell her who were the originals of the portraits. Some of the pictures had names with the shield of arms painted on the canvas, but the writing was very indistinct from age; some had the names on the frames, equally difficult to decipher; whilst a few were without description of any kind. Amongst them were portraits of Mr. Llewellyn and his brother Ivor in their youth; the latter in the uniform he wore when he first entered the army. Of this portrait Lucy remarked—

“ It is very like you, uncle, and it is something like papa.”

“ It was not considered a very striking likeness when it was taken; perhaps I have grown like it; but that one of my brother was exceedingly good.”

“It is not so good a likeness now.”

“We alter as we grow old, and he is become more like our mother. This is her portrait, and the rest of them without names are all of the last generation. Here is my father; the long-flowing hair—or wig, I suppose it was—takes off from the likeness which existed between him and me.”

“They have all a great family likeness. But who is this stern warrior in armour?”

“He was a very prominent person amongst us; he defended this castle against the Parliamentary troops, and put them to rout. He was a strong Royalist, as we all were. And this is his sister.”

“She has long attracted my attention, uncle. I do like her face so much. And she looks like a modern Diana, with her arrows and hound.”

The picture was a full-length portrait of a young lady dressed in white, a large hat looped up at one side with feathers, a deerhound standing beside and looking up at her. A quiver with arrows was in her right hand, a bow unstrung was as a staff in her left, a brace on her left arm, a gauntlet and a chaplet of white roses on the ground before her.

“What relation was she to you, uncle?”

“ She was our great-aunt several times removed. I cannot exactly tell you how many. She was born in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. Joan Llewellyn was her name, and, as you remark, she was a sort of Diana in her way. She roamed about the surrounding country with her pony and her page, her deerhound and her bow and arrows. She was an excellent shot and a very good horsewoman ; and she walked as much as she rode, or as the state of the country would permit. The page led her pony when she walked till they came to bad places, when she mounted, and in the worst parts of the country the page rode behind her on the pony, for in those days there were no made roads amongst the hills. One day, when far from home, as she walked along bow and arrow in hand, her deerhound at her side, her page leading her pony, she met some dragoons, or horse-troopers as I believe they were called in those days, who had only just escaped being swamped in a quagmire amongst the hills. They were in a pitiable state of dirt and wet, and on one coming forward to inquire if shelter could be found for the night, she invited them to the Castle. They came here,

and the result of it was that she married one of the officers. You see here it is written, though not very distinctly, ‘Married to Sir William Thurlestane, Knight, Squire of Becklea, in the county of York.’ She had a short and happy life it is said. In my young days I fell in with, I believe, some of her descendants, but I did not remember it at the time, and I never was at Becklea. Here is another portrait of her in a drab riding-dress and hat, most probably her usual attire, and the page and pony in the background.”

“Perhaps that was the dress she had on when she first met the dragoons?”

“A girl’s romance,” said the Colonel, smiling.

“She looks younger in this portrait though, which may destroy my ‘romance.’”

“Yes; the other portrait was taken just after her marriage, and there is no record that hers was a long engagement. The chaplet of white roses laid at her feet was in honour of her new alliance, for her husband was a thorough Yorkist, and the white rose was their emblem.”

CHAPTER IX.

LUCY.

COLONEL LEWIS was invited to Cwm Castle to shoot; he was to spend several days there, and to bring with him Mr. Doyne, a cavalry officer who was staying at his house. The two gentlemen rode up to the Castle, overtaking Lucy and her uncle Ivor, who were just returned from a walk. Colonel Lewis introduced his companion to Lucy as her “acquaintance at the wicket.” He afterwards, when they were all assembled in the library, commended her, in his good-natured way, with many jokes, upon her wonderful *instinct* in instantly selecting, when they met at the cave path, the only young man of the party to address—he should say, rather, the *youngest* man, for although his own hair had lost a shade or two of its primitive raven’s-wing hue, the Colonel did not consider himself old by any means. What did she

think? But he need not ask ; he was sure, had there been time for a choice to be made, she would assuredly have selected himself as the fitting *young person* to whom her intelligence should be given. As it was, time and a fox wait for no man, and she had no choice but to address the first-comer.

Lucy sat speechless and blushing ; it was natural she should be confused on this reference to the little episode. Her uncle saw her distress, and came to her rescue by turning the colonel's jokes to himself. As to Mr. Doyne, who had been very much taken with her *naïve* manner and her appearance on their first meeting, he was quite disappointed now to find that she had neither a word to say nor could overcome her shyness and reserve. Her manner, indeed, might have been ascribed to bad temper, especially when she took her embroidery and sat apart at the window. But temper was not a failing of hers ; she was simply embarrassed, torturing herself because of her behaviour on the morning of the hunt.

Why, she thought, had not her mother explained this to her, which she had failed to

perceive at the time, instead of leaving it to be made a joke of by strangers! She should not have felt it so much if Mr. Doyne had not been there; but what would he, a young man, and a stranger even to her uncles, think? She did not so much consider the older gentlemen, for they probably were too much taken up with the hunt. No doubt she ought to have addressed one of them; how unfortunate it was she had not done so! The fox had taken possession of her mind; she had thought of nothing beyond.

Colonel Llewellyn was sorry to see her so distressed; so was Colonel Lewis, who was talking in his usual rapid manner, and detailing the incidents of various "runs;" "and," said he, "we are deeply indebted to Miss Askham for the best run we have had this season. If it had not been for her opportune announcement of Reynard's arrival, at the cave wicket, we should have lost it, and probably have had a blank day. We are greatly indebted to you, Miss Askham."

Lucy was glad when all the gentlemen left the room. Then she went to her mother, and sat herself on the footstool at her feet.

"Mamma," she said, "why did you leave me in ignorance that I had acted unbecomingly in speaking to the gentlemen at the wicket that morning? I assure you I never intended to be forward or unladylike. Do believe me, dear mamma."

"My dear, I quite believe you, and I do not consider you acted in any way unbecoming a lady, nor does your father, nor your uncles. If it had been otherwise I should have told you so at once. You must learn to have more confidence in yourself, and also to take a joke. Colonel Lewis loves a joke, and, what might be said, perhaps, of another person, to tease a little; but with him it is all in perfect good-nature; he would not willingly hurt any one's feelings; so dry up your tears, for on this occasion they are exceedingly foolish. Believe in your own good sense, which will not betray you into mistakes of this kind."

However, poor Lucy could not get over it. She would still torture herself by reflecting upon her *late* conduct. They must think her sulky; no doubt she did appear so. What a foolish girl she was! Would not her uncle Ivor

understand her? Her mother told her to think no more about it, and regain her cheerfulness. She would try to do so, but feared she would miserably fail; she felt completely out of spirits. But this self-confession took so ludicrous a turn in her mind that it cured her exaggerated sensitiveness, and she determined to make friends with Colonel Lewis; and so saying she left the room, where she had remained alone for some time.

When they all met at luncheon Lucy had regained her composure. She sat next to Colonel Lewis, and entered into the lively conversation which he led, and was quite herself again.

Very pleasantly the time passed at the Castle. Several parties took place, and excursions were made, whilst a hunt ball was given at a neighbouring house. At all of these Lucy met Mr. Doyne.

Colonel Lewis was her devoted admirer. She went to stay at his house, and his wife was equally pleased with her.

“Oh, if you were but my daughter!” he would say to her.

Colonel and Mrs. Lewis had lost their only child in infancy. The former saw the growing attachment between Lucy and Mr. Doyne, and was rejoiced at it.

“Doyne is a lucky fellow if he wins her,” he said to his wife.

CHAPTER X.

LUCY MAKES A DISCOVERY.

ONE evening at the Castle Lucy said to the Colonel—

“ Uncle Ivor, what is this very curiously-ugly thing? It looks like an animal, but it is too small.”

“ It is ‘an animal,’ at least it is a small tortoise. Ah!” he said, after a pause, “ it was given to me when I was a lad by poor Thurlestane.”

“ Thurlestane ! ” said Mr. Askham, jumping up, and going to him, “ what do you know about a Thurlestane ? ”

“ Know ! ” said the Colonel, taken by surprise at Mr. Askham’s sudden attack upon him, and his question,—“ know ! not much, I am sorry to say. But the history of this tortoise is, that one of that name, a major, I forget in what regiment, was staying here when I was a lad, just

about joining the army. He gave me this snuff-box, which he brought from abroad.” Then, after a pause, he added, “What a nice agreeable fellow he was, full of fun and anecdote. But,” he continued, “why do you ask? Do you know anything about them? I believe they have all died out. He died in the West Indies many years ago.”

“Can you tell us anything about any of the ladies of that name?” said Mrs. Askham.

“Alas, no!” said the Colonel, dolefully, shaking his head, and with a sigh.

“Except that one in the gallery who married a Thurlestane,” said Lucy.

The Colonel avoided the subject, and the conversation passed to other things.

Lucy sat facing her father and uncles, and after looking at them a short time she said to the Colonel—

“Dear uncle, you will excuse my making the remark, but I never saw such a wonderful likeness as there is between you and papa; if you were his father or his brother, you could not be more alike.

“Always allowing for the differences of age, Lucy.”

“Yes, and the colour of the hair. What colour was your hair, uncle, when you were young?”

“Well, I should suppose much about that of your father’s.”

“Oh, it *is* curious! and the same tone of voice too.” Then, addressing her father, she added, “Both my uncles speak like you, papa. I noticed it as soon as I came here. And the likeness between you and uncle Ivor grows more and more perceptible.”

“Well, my love,” said her father, “we are relations.”

“Yes; but mamma is not like them.”

“Likenesses show themselves in a strange manner, even at long intervals of generations.” Then, turning to his wife, he asked, “Do you see the likeness, Louisa?”

“I certainly do, it is very strong; but I should not, like Lucy, have noticed it as anything extraordinary, as we are all cousins.”

CHAPTER XI.

COLONEL LLEWELLYN AT WOODNASTON.

THE period for Mary's marriage with Jeffrey Dale was fast approaching, and Mr. and Mrs. Askham and Lucy returned home.

After the marriage Lucy felt lonely without her sister, although she had always been a favourite companion to her father. Her mother had sent her constantly, even when a child, to "amuse" him ; and this duty fell more and more upon her when after a serious illness her mother's strength had given way, and at the same time her father's strange moments of dejection had increased. It was melancholy to see him sometimes ; he seemed lost in thought, and, with his eyes fixed looking far away into an imaginary distance, seemed unconscious of all around him. And when, with a heavy sigh, the reverie ended, the sadness would continue for some time after.

At such times his wife would ask him—

“What is the matter, George? Oh, tell me what it is that afflicts you. It makes me so unhappy to see that you have cares hidden from me. Why cannot I share them? They would then be lighter to you.”

“My love, you cannot share in all my thoughts.” Then, smiling sadly, he would say, “I was only ‘thinking upon things,’ as our old nurse says; and things that happened years ago.”

“Oh, forget them, George.”

“One cannot always obliterate old recollections—but there, never mind—do not think any more about me—let me see *you* happy and cheerful; that is all I care for, my dear, dear wife.”

Mrs. Askham did not like to press him too much upon the subject; she concluded these melancholy recollections referred to the loss of his brother, to whom he had been much attached, and who, Farmer Giles has already told us, was killed “in the wars.”

Colonel Llewellyn came to visit them, and whilst he was there an unexpected discovery was made of letters relative to Mistress Ann Lystone’s affairs.

Advertisements and inquiries without number had been sent by Mr. Askham to Ulsford and York, but hitherto no clue could be found to "Mother Pendle." Her effects were all kept locked up in the library closet in which they were first placed, and no allusion was ever made to them.

One day, in talking over old family matters and occurrences, Lucy said—

"I do not think, uncle, one story you have told is to be compared with that one about Dame Joan, who married the dragoon she met coming out of the swamp."

"I do not know that story, Lucy. What is it?" said her father.

The Colonel laughed and said, "You have improved upon it, Lucy. You allude, I suppose, to the young lady in white in the gallery at Cwm."

"Yes, uncle; do tell it. I so often went to look at her, and thought how I should like to have been with her, riding and roaming about."

The Colonel told her history. "The dragoon

she married was Sir William Thurlestane, Knight, of Becklea."

"Thurlestane! what, Thurlestane of Becklea in Yorkshire? Then they were connected with the Llewellyns?" exclaimed Mr. Askham.

"Yes," said Colonel Llewellyn, "in this marriage. In no other way that I know of. Her life was a short one; she left several children, mostly sons I believe, so perhaps they may be traced. One Thurlestane was a peer, the Earl of Becklea, but I do not know which branch of the family he represented; and I told you of Major Thurlestane who was at Cwm when I was a youth, and was son of one of the Earls. They have all died out I am told."

"Did you ever meet any others of the family?"

"Yes; at a ball in Yorkshire I met the old Earl and Countess of Becklea, and their granddaughter, called 'the Lady Ann,' who was also, I found, niece to Major Thurlestane. That was when I was quite a lad; I had not long joined the army."

"Most extraordinary!" said Mr. Askham.

“What more can you tell us of the Lady Ann? Whose daughter was she?”

“This is all I know about them. Lady Coryton, at a ball at whose house I met them, lived about thirty miles from York. She was related to one of our officers, who took me to the ball. She introduced me to the Lady Ann, and I danced with her, and was introduced to the Earl and Countess also. Several years after I was again at her house; I naturally asked after my former partner in the dance, the Lady Ann, whom I had never forgotten. I was told she was a coquette, who after bringing gentlemen to her feet, spurned them. I would not believe it. The old Earl and Countess were dead, and the then Earl of Becklea was a bookworm, who saw no one. Subsequently I was informed, also by Lady Coryton, that the Lady Ann had married beneath her, to spite some lovers—and I could not believe *that*. I have never seen her since, and I do not know whom she married.” This was said in a sad, solemn voice.

“Can you tell us nothing more?”

"No. I do not remember anything more. Oh—yes—her father was a clergyman."

"You shall see what remembrances we have of the family, which came into my possession in rather a mysterious way," said Mr. Askham. "And my aim is to find out all I can about the Thurlestanes and their connections. Hitherto I have failed to discover anything that may lead to solve the mystery. Dale and I have tried all sources that we can think of, but to no purpose. We want to establish that 'the Lady Ann,' one 'Ann Lystone,' and a certain 'old Mother Pendle' were one and the same person."

The Colonel laughed heartily. "Ha, ha, ha. My dear George, you will then be searching for an improbability. The latter could have no connection with the Lady Ann *I* remember."

"You never saw 'Mother Pendle,'" said Mrs. Askham, "or you might be as prepared to credit it as we are."

"Impossible!" said the Colonel.

"Not so impossible, I assure you, Ivor," said Mrs. Askham. "You should have seen her

dignity and grace.” (The Colonel laughed.)
“ Yes, I repeat, her dignity and grace.”

“ The Lady Ann *had* dignity and grace, most assuredly,” said the Colonel.

“ So had ‘ Mother Pendle,’ ” said Mrs. Askham; “ she impressed all who saw her with it. Some people, such as Farmer Giles and his wife, and others of that class, would not sit down in her presence.”

“ Her curtsey,” said Mr. Askham, “ when she came to pay her modicum of rent—only a few shillings—was as if she had been a lady at Court accustomed to dance a minuet. It was perfect.”

“ Dance a minuet!” said the colonel. “ The *real* Lady Ann had not her equal for grace in a minuet—but what can ‘ Mother Pendle’ have to do with that! It is too absurd! My dear cousins, you must have puzzled your brains and got confused over this subject.”

“ Not at all. You shall see what we have of hers,” said Mrs. Askham.

“ Not at present. I have letters to write which will occupy some time. Another day I

shall be at your service, and shall be glad to see all you can show me."

"We will ask Dale to come up to be present also," said Mr. Askham; "he and I are always associated in 'Mother Pendle's' affairs."

CHAPTER XII.

THE COLONEL'S ROMANCE.

THE next day Mr. Dale came to the Hall, and the party assembled in the library to examine the contents of the closet. Lucy had never seen the treasures, nor had she ever heard of "Mother Pendle" except as a poor old woman who had lived on the Common, and been lost in the snow. She was quite curious to see all there was.

The story of the old woman, her appearance, manners, cottage, etc. was told to Colonel Llewellyn, who could only see in it the history of an eccentric woman, probably of a better class originally than her later mode of life would indicate. The "lady's - maid" or the "school-mistress" seemed to him the nearest to her class ; and he said they probably would find papers showing that the valuables found were left to her by will by a former master or mistress. He

had not, however, seen any of them when he said this.

He was much astonished at the richness of the plate, and decided it was of either Spanish or Portuguese workmanship. The box too with its many locks greatly interested him ; “box-building,” as he called it, being a favourite occupation.

When at length they came to the box of miniatures, Mrs. Askham, who was showing them to him with various comments, said on opening one, “Now, Ivor, prepare to be astonished ; I shall not tell you why, till you have seen the miniature ;” and she showed him the portrait of the young man dressed in pale blue which had so startled Mr. Dale.

The Colonel started, looked at it with an inquiring gaze, and trembled with astonishment even more than Mrs. Askham had foretold.

“What is the matter, uncle ?” said Lucy.
“Do let me see. Who is it ?”

Mrs. Askham also inquired, “What has happened ? what makes you look so scared ? Did you know that person ?”

But no answer was returned.

Mr. Askham looked over the Colonel's

shoulder, who held the portrait as one entranced, and said, “Why, Dale, that is the miniature that struck you so much as being so like old ‘Mother Pendle.’”

“Mother Pendle!” at last exclaimed the Colonel,—“Mother Pendle, say you? It is the exact likeness of HER.”

“Whom? Mother Pendle?”

“Of HER—THE LADY ANN—THURLESTANE,” said the Colonel.

“Most extraordinary!” said Mr. Dale.

“Oh, uncle,” said Lucy, “you are full of mysteries. What does all this mean? Why are you so excited and overcome?”

The Colonel had sunk down in a chair, the miniature in one hand, his face buried in the other. Moans told the anguish of his mind. Lucy went to speak to him, but he paid no attention to her for some time; then he took her hand and kissed it. Mr. and Mrs. Askham, seeing how distressed he was, thought it best to leave him to himself, and with Mr. Dale left the room, and desired Lucy to follow them; but she could not leave her beloved uncle in his trouble, and sat down on the floor beside him. Soon

after she left the room, and returned bringing some wine, which she offered him. The Colonel was walking to and fro when she returned, still looking at the miniature. He drank the wine, and then said to her in a low, sad voice, "Lucy, this Lady Ann was the only woman I ever loved. This is her exact likeness, making the allowance between a young lady and a young man. Whose portrait is it? Do you know?"

"No, uncle; I have never seen these things before; but I saw mamma take one out of its case, and perhaps this one will come out too."

The Colonel took it carefully out, and found the inscription on the written paper.

"Oh," he said, "he was her father. I never saw a stronger likeness."

"Tell me about her, uncle. Where did you know her? Is she dead?"

"I have already told you something of her, but you did not know of whom I spoke, or the pain it was to me to say even the little I did." Then after a pause he resumed, "Know, then, Lucy, that that lady was my first, my only love. It was love at first sight with me; and I ventured to think or hope that she was not

indifferent to me. But how could I venture to approach her, or even think of her, as a lover? I was a cadet of the family, with no fortune but my sword. How could I presume to pay my addresses to her, the grand-daughter of an Earl who held the first position in his county, herself perhaps an heiress, or otherwise much above me. I had nothing but my poor love, my ardent affection, to offer."

"A rich gift, uncle," said Lucy, with a sigh (she was thinking perhaps for the moment of Mr. Doyne).

"Yes, my love, romantically speaking, no doubt. But not sufficient to marry upon. Young as I was, I felt all this; and I determined, if she could but wait for me, to earn a fortune, perhaps a name. This was in my happy moments. Despair that she never could wait for me sometimes took possession of my mind, and in the end proved true."

"Did you never propose to her then?"

"No, my love; in my penniless condition how could I venture to do so?"

"Did you often see her?"

"After my first acquaintance, which was at

a ball in Yorkshire, at Lady Coryton's, whom you have heard me mention, I saw her twice at distant periods; but I did not venture to speak to her or obtrude myself on her notice, and I am very sure she did not see me either time."

"Oh, uncle! 'nothing venture nothing have' is the old proverb. If you loved her so, why did you not approach her?"

"My love, I have already told you I was a penniless soldier, and so far not the proper person to pay my addresses to her."

"How was it you saw her without her seeing you?"

"Once it was in London. One night in a most terrific thunderstorm, as I came out of the theatre, I saw her being led by the footman through the pouring rain and the muddy street to their coach, which could not get up to the door of the theatre for the press of coaches, and was therefore standing in a side street. I followed her the few yards she had still to walk, her train draggled with mud, and her satin shoes, I am sure, wet through. It was very slippery; the link-boys could scarcely keep their links alight, and I wished to be at hand if

any harm awaited her. But, draggled, wet, and dirty as she was, she reached the coach in safety, and I heard her laughing as she got in; and the coach drove off immediately. Then, some long time after, when I had returned from abroad, and was at York on our march north, I walked round by the Minster, and was about to enter. A crowd of people was coming out, and amongst it the Lady Ann, deeply engaged in conversation with a tall, gaunt-looking girl with red hair, who was weeping. They got into a coach which awaited them and drove off. Thus, again, I would not venture to intrude when I saw her with her weeping friend. I asked a bystander whose coach it was, and he answered some stranger's, for by the build it did not belong to that part of the country. The next day I tried to trace her, but to no purpose, and we resumed our march. She was still the dignified, graceful girl I had first seen. She did not see me. Perhaps I was altered and sunburnt by the climates I had been in. I never saw her more. When I was again at Lady Coryton's, I asked after my dancing partner at the ball of many years before. She gave me not a prepos-

sessing account of the Lady Ann. She said she was a capricious, spoilt young woman, a finished coquette, who, after alluring young men to her side, turned them off with a flirt of her fan in contempt. And she named half a dozen men, even eligible young men, to whom she had been engaged, and had treated in the same way."

"Did you believe this scandal, uncle?"

"No, my love; I was excessively indignant, and denied the possibility of such conduct on her part. Some long time after, when I was again on a visit there, I found the old Earl and Countess of Becklea had died. Lady Coryton told me again of the Lady Ann's bad behaviour; and, to convince me of its truth, added that finally, after dismissing a gentleman, she bitterly lamented her conduct, when he took her at her word and left her; and, to spite him as she thought, married a man much beneath her, eloping in a disgraceful way from her father's house; and that her father would not receive nor forgive her."

"Did she say with whom she had eloped?"

"If she did, I do not remember the name. I

was too much distressed and hurt at what she had told me, and at the same time incapable of believing any of the other stories, if the elopement was an undeniable fact. Thus it was useless for me ever to think of her again or attempt to see her. So the whole happiness of the dream that had pervaded so much of my life faded away in an hour. She had been my guiding star. All I had accumulated in riches had been dedicated to her. I was well off now, and she, to all time, beyond my reach ! Since then I have hoped I might never see her again ; I could not bear to find her an altered person, in bad circumstances perhaps, or in poverty. And I thought, How could I meet the man who had robbed me of my heart's dearest treasure ! I have dreamed that I had him by the throat to annihilate him, when her sweet face has come between us."

" Was she pretty, uncle ? "

" No, I suppose not, strictly speaking ; she was like this portrait, without the powder, for she wore her rich brown hair in its natural colour. She had the same fine dark gray eyes, and straight nose ; but her mouth was large,

and she had a determined expression about it and her chin, which I thought charming. ‘It shows so much character,’ I said in my amorous days; and with her infinite grace, good breeding, and dignity made her a divinity in my eyes; and such she has ever been to me. I admired her the more when I saw her trudging with a stout heart in the wet street to her coach; and more still when I saw her the consoler of her afflicted friend, coming out of York Minster.”

“Was her married name ‘Pendle’?”

“I do not know; but I cannot conceive any connection between her and the person you call by that name, notwithstanding Mr. Dale was struck by the likeness in this miniature.”

“Oh, uncle, I am so sorry for you. Why did you not propose to her and marry her?”

“My love, it was not to be, you see. I cast my lot in a fruitless channel, and the joy of my life went with it.”

Mr. and Mrs. Askham returned to ask the Colonel to come and take luncheon, and were

pleased to find he had recovered from his shock.

Mr. Askham locked up the room and took the key, leaving all the silver on the table, that the Colonel might return to examine it when he might please.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE CHEST IS EXAMINED.

“Now let me examine this Chinese chest,” said the Colonel, when they returned to the library. “It is clumsily made, the bottom piece especially so. And although the silver is solid and heavy, there was no occasion for such a bottom and sides.” So he took out the drawer containing the spoons, and turned the chest upside down; in doing so, out fell two slides. He righted the box, and found papers in the recesses behind the slides; they were carefully taken out, and found to contain thin pieces of beaten-out silver of various sizes, the subjects being mythological; such as Diana in the chase, Venus in her chariot with doves, Neptune with his dolphins, Orpheus with goats dancing to his music. The latter Lucy admired the most; the goats were so graceful, and, with modern fancy, Orpheus was represented with his right foot in the act of beating time.”

“ This cannot be very antique,” she remarked ; “ surely the ancients knew nothing about beating time.”

“ No,” answered Mr. Askham, “ it is evidently none of it antique.”

The small pieces were floral subjects—seventeen pieces in all—most beautifully chased.

There were also some letters, which were read. They were mostly signed, “ Your affectionate uncle and godfather, EDGAR THURLESTANE.” The outer one was addressed to “ The Lady Ann Thurlestane.” The writer (her uncle) begged her acceptance of these trifles, some of which he had procured in Spain, some at Goa, and finally had had the box made for them at Canton. He had intended to have the chased silver plates made into a casket for her, but he thought she might suit her own taste better if she had them as they were, and had sent her £300 for the silversmith’s expenses. Enclosed in this letter was another, saying that since he had written it he had heard with the deepest grief of her marriage with one John Lystone, a family which of all others was the most unsuitable for her, and the most objectionable to him and all her father’s

family. Deeply he deplored this marriage and the manner in which it was effected, which, however, was perhaps the only way it could have taken place. Pages he could write on the subject, so sore was it to his heart. If ever he returned to England, he must see her again ; but *alone* ; nothing would induce him to meet her abductor. He prayed with all his heart that his darling grand-niece might not be unhappy. He was getting on in years, and begged her not to leave him without tidings of her ; that letters would always be forwarded to him by his bankers in London, Messrs. Gregorie in the Strand, where a small sum of money was left in trust for *her sole use*. With a solemn blessing upon his beloved, his darling niece, he subscribed himself in the customary affectionate way.

Another letter was from the above-mentioned bankers in London, Messrs. Gregorie of the Strand, giving her notice of her uncle's death, and of her inheritance of £5000, strictly tied up for herself and children. It was addressed to "Mistress Ann Lystone, Post Office, YORK."

"So then we have here corroboration of Mistress or my Lady Ann and Ann Lystone

being one and the same person," said Mr. Askham. "In the letter we found addressed to me, in which she makes me her heir 'subject to certain conditions,' she says of herself, 'Known at Woodnaston as Ann Pendle, or Mother Pendle.' Where and how did she get that name? Had she married a second time? What do you say, Dale?"

"I think the best way will be to communicate with Messrs. Gregorie," replied Mr. Dale; "as they know of her money, they may know her further history."

"Who was John Lystone?" inquired the Colonel.

"He was the grandson of an old Chaplain of that name, who was a notorious hard liver and insolent fellow, at Becklea, in the old Earl's time, the father of the Earl you remember, Llewellyn," said Mr. Askham, adding some account of him. "But you shall read the letters Dale has from his sister; they give all the information we have of him."

"I should much like to do so. But how did the Lady Ann become acquainted with this John Lystone?" asked the Colonel.

“ That is yet to be known.”

“ When did John Lystone die ? ”

“ We have yet to find that out ; nor do we know who ‘ Pendle ’ was. He may be still alive.”

“ Or perhaps never existed, as she signs the name Lystone as well,” said Mr. Dale.

“ There must have been a very strong reason for the Lady Ann adopting an *alias* ; it would be incompatible with her high breeding to do so except under some strange pressure,” observed the Colonel.

“ We do not know to what straits she was reduced under this fatal marriage, for such I consider it,” returned Mr. Askham.

“ And,” added Mr. Dale, “ I strongly suspect we shall find she had assumed the style and name of ‘ Mother Pendle ’ as a refuge from some persecution.”

“ Alas, alas ! ” cried the Colonel, “ who could have imagined that the Lady Ann, the stately, high-born lady, whom I remember in all her pride and grandeur, should have fallen so low ! Lost in the snow ! Buried, unknown, in a pauper’s grave, after living a life of penury, possibly, in her old age ! ”

"No," said Mr. Dale, "we were glad to find she had ample means for her small wants."

"I am rejoiced to hear it, sir," said the Colonel. "And now that I know who 'Mother Pendle' was, I can scarcely make up my mind to call her by such a name. I shall be much obliged to you, sir," addressing Mr. Dale, "if you will take me to her grave. It is all that is left for me to do."

"Oh no, dear Ivor, you will not leave her so; you will help us to find out her further history, and what her wishes were that are not expressed in her letter to George," interposed Mrs. Askham.

"True, Louisa. I may do that for her. I can help you."

Mrs. Askham saw how completely unnerved the good old gentleman was, and took him with her into her sitting-room; but before he left the library he made an appointment with Mr. Dale for the next day to visit the grave.

CHAPTER XIV.

IN THE CHURCHYARD.

COLONEL LLEWELLYN was so unwell that his visit to the grave had been postponed. Mr. and Mrs. Askham were grieved to see him so low in spirits and in health ; but Mr. Dale thought he would be better when his visit to the grave was over, as it seemed to prey upon his mind, so they offered no resistance when he said he was well enough to go. He was driven by the groom to the Rectory, from which he walked to the grave—it was but a few yards through the garden—with Mr. Dale. It was a small grass-covered mound, like all the rest, situated between a yew tree and the wall of the churchyard.

There was not even a wooden head-mark to mark the spot where lay the last remains of the Lady Ann Thurlestane ; but Mr. Dale had the grave duly set down in his plan of the ground, and knew at once where to find it.

"And is this all?" inquired the Colonel, when he got to the grave. "Are you sure, Mr. Dale, that this is HER resting-place?"

"Quite sure, sir," he replied.

"How small it looks! one would say it was but a young girl's grave."

"She was small when young, no doubt, and in old age she had most probably shrunk, for when measured she was barely five feet in length, and excessively thin."

"Poor dear! poor dear! And was hers a poor parish funeral?"

"No," replied Mr. Dale, "I gave her a better funeral than that, for I respected her so much; and she was to all appearance so far above her supposed, I may say, her *visible*, position, that I gave her the most fitting she could have."

"Had she funds to pay for it?"

"We could only find a few shillings and pence when we first searched amongst her effects, but I gladly defrayed all the expenses."

"God bless you, sir," said the Colonel, taking the Rector's hand. "I thank you most heartily for your good feeling. I take it as a kindness done to myself; for although in reality I was in no

way connected with her, she has been a part of myself, my every-day dream, from the first moment I saw her."

"She was universally respected by all sensible people in the neighbourhood. There was not one that was not sorry to hear of her sad death."

"Why do you say 'all sensible' people?"

"Because the ignorant boys scoffed at her on account of her singular appearance."

"I remember, I remember; you told me of it. I little heeded what you said then; I did not know it so nearly touched myself. You must please tell it me all again when I can bear to hear it. All concerning HER is precious to me."

He got so excited that Mr. Dale thought he had better be left to himself for a short time, and made an excuse to go into the church.

When he returned, after a few minutes, he found Colonel Llewellyn almost convulsed with emotion, leaning over the grave, supported by his stick. He gently led him away back to his own study at the Rectory, where he gave him a cordial, took off his coat, neckhandkerchief, and shoes, and wrapping him up in a large warm coverlet,

laid him on the sofa near the cheerful fire. The soothing influence and quiet of the room soon took effect ; the Colonel slept like a child. His face was pale as death, and the expression weary and sorrowful, when he lay down ; but after about four hours' good sleep he awoke like a different person. Mrs. Askham and Lucy, who meantime had been sent for, were taken into the study, and their kind faces and words were most acceptable. The Colonel could not sufficiently express his gratitude to Mr. Dale for his kind attention.

The only allusion he made to the scene in the morning was to tell Mr. Dale that his work was to put up a proper tomb to HER memory.

“ That you shall do, sir, according to your own wishes,” was the answer.

Mrs. Askham drove him back to the Hall in her pony carriage, but Lucy stayed behind, and heard from the Rector what had taken place in the churchyard.

“ I feared the old gentleman would have a fit,” he said ; “ I expected to see him fall on his face on the grave. I must confess I was then somewhat alarmed at the possible consequence of this

visit. I concluded from what he said that he had been engaged to be married to the Lady Ann. Was it so?"

"No," said Lucy, "not exactly engaged to be married, but she was his first, his only love, he says."

"From beginning to end this is the most extraordinary story I ever heard. Did she love him, I wonder?"

"I do not know, but from what I have heard I should imagine there was a third person, a mischief-maker, who played a treacherous part—perhaps with each of them," replied Lucy.

"He had some scheme of his own perhaps."

"I think it was a lady who made the mischief."

"No doubt," said Mr. Dale, laughing, "trust her for that, if she is not by nature amiable. Don't you remember, Lucy, Lord Macartney's story of the Emperor of China, who, when he heard of any insurrection or difference between his subjects, immediately said, 'What woman is at the bottom of that?' or words to that effect?"

CHAPTER XV.

THE TOMB.

COLONEL LLEWELLYN was bent upon having a handsome tomb placed over the grave ; he constantly referred to it. Finally he went with Mr. Askham to Carlisle, where a very good statuary was employed to work for the Cathedral, and ordered one. The inscription was a difficult matter to settle ; his decision was to have merely—

HERE LIES THE BODY OF
The Lady Ann Thurlestane,
THE LAST OF HER RACE,

inscribed on the front slab. But the stonemason said it was customary to have the lineage, the name of her husband if she had had one, and the necessary dates as well.

The Colonel, however, could not agree to this. To have that abhorrent name publicly acknowledged as hers ! He could not do it. If it was

found to be necessary that the record should be made, it should be on another slab to be placed inside the church. He would not publish her disgrace and misfortunes to all the idlers who wandered into the churchyard.

In due time the tomb arrived at Woodnaston and was placed over the grave. It was of the purest white marble, with the short inscription in gold letters.

The Colonel was in daily attendance during the time of its erection, and his mind was more at ease when it was finished. He then set to work diligently to read all the papers Mr. Askham and Mr. Dale could give him, including Mrs. Page's letters, and especially Ann's last letter to Mr. Askham. He read this a dozen times over, and was never tired of hearing Mr. Askham and Mr. Dale, or their wives, talk of her.

He considered it was now his duty as well as his pleasure to aid in discovering where information could be obtained concerning Lady Ann and her affairs ; especially the further documents she alluded to, or another will, stating her wishes as to the distribution of her property, whatever it was.

He made one journey to York with Mr. Askham to try and find out if any trace of her could be discovered in Monk Street, but without avail ; and neither he nor Mr. Askham knew where else to apply, nor could Mr. Dale help them. After the lapse of so many years she seemed lost.

The fatigues of the journey were too much for the poor old gentleman, added to his anxiety. He was laid up for some days on his arrival at Woodnaston, and finally had to return to Wales.

Much correspondence was carried on when he left. He had apparently entered a new life, one that gave him constant occupation.

Mr. Llewellyn was quite taken by surprise when he heard the story. He had never heard his brother allude in any way to his unfortunate love affair. He had considered him a most determined old bachelor ; in fact he had declared, when the subject had been mooted, he thought he never had cared for "the fair sex." But it interested him exceedingly to hear all the Colonel could tell him, though he could be of no help to him in his researches, for he had never known any of the Becklea family.

Lady Coryton, however, he had known a little,

meeting her in London when she was bringing out her daughters; and considering her an intriguing woman, was as unwilling as the Colonel to believe the reports she had spread of Ann's habit of treating her lovers.

"I think, Ivor," he said, "she had guessed, or perhaps heard, of your fancy for the Lady Ann, and was determined to have her revenge upon *me* through *you*; for I had steadily refused in action, though not in words, to be mixed up with her and her plain and, to me, not agreeable daughters, when she was trying to get them off her hands. She could not catch me in her net, so she determined to frustrate all *your* hopes."

"Ah! she succeeded well in making my life a blank! My only hope is, that her malice did not extend to *HER*!"

At Woodnaston the tomb was more than "a nine days' wonder." Every Sunday the villagers visited and examined it, making their remarks upon it and "the lady."

"I allays said she wor more nor she looked," said Sally Giles.

"Ah, one could see that; the likes o' we couldn't put on her ways," said Farmer Giles.

“The Squire a most knowed it from the first, but he couldn’t make out how to say it, I’ll be bound.”

“So did a most the old Squire. Why, he’d have her to sit up aside of him at the audit dinners ! I’ve seed him !”

“It’s a wonder to see how they could let her live so, and never speak to her, nor go near her, if they knowed she wor a lady born.”

“Why, she wouldn’t let ‘em. It’s not like the old Squire nor the young one neither, Sall, to ha’ done so if so be they’d knowed it ; but they didn’t know it for certain, no more nor we, till this strange gentleman found her out ; it’s he has done it, and I’m right glad the poor old soul has got a proper burying.”

“You needn’t call her a poor old soul now, but ‘my lady’ straight out, as she was. Who’d ‘a thought it ? To see her in that pertickler bonnet !”

“Well, it’s writ out all plain now—the Lady Ann Te—Th—Terth—— I can’t turn that name nohow. It’s not a name we know about here.”

“Never mind, the Lady Ann will do as nice as

any, and it's a pootty name too. Well, to be sure! to think o' what curous things there is in the world! People a turning up as no one ever heard on, and not having their proper names, and going about as if they had. But she was a good lady, and I couldn't help respecting her all the same, though I didn't know it."

"That's right, Sall, so shall I," said the farmer.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE HOLLY CLUB.

“ HEY, holloa. Here. Will Stokes. Where are ye ?” were the cries that were heard at the cottage at Ashencroft gate one morning early. “ Hey there, Bill. What, are ye not up yet ?” said the same voice ; and a youth rushed out of the cottage, saying—

“ Here I be. What do ye make sik a clatter aboot ? What do ye want ?”

“ Want, young shaver ? Oh, you’re also Bill Stokes by the likeness. Where’s your father ?”

“ He’s doon at the quarry.”

“ At the quarry ? Why, isn’t he a shepherd ?”

“ Noa, he works in the quarry.”

“ Go and tell him I want him.”

“ Please, sir,” said the lad, pulling his hair, “ who be I to say wants he ?”

"An old friend, lad. He'll know when he sees me."

Presently Mary Ferner, formerly Mary Stokes, came round the corner of the cottage, and the stranger addressed her—

"Hey, Mary ! I'm glad to see ye looking so well. Why, you don't look a day older than when I saw you last." He had taken her hand and shaken it violently, whilst she stood with her eyes and mouth wide open, astonished to find a handsome-looking, stalwart man, well dressed, "and set up as a gentleman," as she afterwards said, shaking her hand and speaking so familiarly to her.

"Why, don't ye know me, Mary ? "

"No, sir," she said, with a bob curtsey.

"Not know me ? Not know David Wads ? What, not know Will's old mate ? He'll know me in a minute. Where is he ? "

Her face had changed at the mention of his name and her late husband's coupled together as friends. She snatched away her hand from his grasp, and the expression of her face became that of a fury.

"*You* come back ! and ye ask for poor

Will? I'd like to ask you what ye did to him?"

"Me? What I did to him? I haven't seen him. The boy's run to fetch him."

"Fetch he, to see ye, when ye've killed him?"

"Killed him? what do you mean? Why I've only just come home on leave, and seen no one. I've been soldiering all these years."

"A soldiering, ye wicked vagabond! And what did ye do afore ye went a soldiering? Who killed my poor Will? If it wasn't you, you was amongst 'em."

"Killed poor Will? what the devil do you mean, Mary Stokes? Why the boy's gone to fetch him!"

"Aye, killed poor Will; for all your swearing. If ye didn't do it, who ever did? for it's in follerling your bad ways that he got wrong."

"Killed poor Will? when was he killed?"

"Ah, it's like your imperence to ask that, Mr. Innocent! as if ye didn't know quite well."

"I know nothing about it, Mary Stokes."

"I tell ye I'm not Mary Stokes now. Come here; I'll show ye; I've kep' it on purpose to

convict ye," and she led the way into the cottage, and pointed to the holly club that was placed over the mantelpiece. "What do ye say to that, hey? Do you know that, hey?"

He took the club down and examined it; then he said—

"Aye, right well do I remember it. I saw Will cut it the day I enlisted."

"And ye killed he with it, into the bargain."

"No, that I did not. But I asked him what he was cutting it for. Lor, how well I remember it all now! What a murderous weapon it is!"

"Well, if ye didn't kill poor Will, who did? for ye seem to know a deal about it."

"Here's father, sir," said the youth, entering with a working man.

The two men looked at each other, and at last Wads said, "Is that you, John Ferner?"

"Yes, sir," he answered, pulling his hair, "but I don't recall you."

"Don't call he 'sir,' John," said Mary; "he's not 'sir,' he's David Wads, a real murderer. He killed my poor Will," and she put her apron to her eyes and burst into tears.

"Killed poor Will? Did ye, sir?" said Ferner, looking aghast.

"No, my good man. Many's the one I've killed in battle, I know, but I never murdered any one."

"He did, he did. He knows he did," cried Mary.

"Well," said Wads, "this *is* a greeting! and after so many years beating about the world! Now, Mary, dry your eyes, and tell me what all this means. I can't understand it nohow."

"It's no use your shamming, you know more nor we do, but ye ran away and 'listed like a vagabond, ye did!"

"The woman's mad," he said. "Ferner, do tell me what she means."

John Ferner then gave him an account of what had happened, as related in the commencement of this story. Wads was quite astonished. He had never heard from home during his absence, and did not even know that his own father had died. He had recently landed at Whitehaven, and this cottage was the first near his home he had come to.

"And now I have told you of poor Will's

death, tell me what you know about that holly club," said John Ferner. Mary was sitting by, listening.

"Will Stokes was out on his rambles that morning early," said Wads; "I don't think it was much past six when I met him and Tom Sapper coming along. You remember Tom Sapper, Mary?" She nodded her head. "They had their pockets full of leverets, not a rabbit amongst 'em. They said they'd had a good haul, and were going to take the most of 'em to a fellow at Ulsford—it was the great market that day. He left us and went on. I went home to get some breakfast, and I know that Tom went to Ulsford, for I saw him there, and he 'listed with one party and I with another, and I've never heard of him since. Well, I met Will Stokes again; he was alone then, and he said would I come into the wood with him. It was one of Mr. Askham's woods. I said I would; and he went straight to a young holly tree that grew in a very pertickler manner, and after cutting and cutting away for some time, he brought away that very self-same stick as you're holding of now, John Ferner. I never saw one

like it afore or after. I said to him, ‘What have you cut that stick for, it’s a right dangerous one?’ Said he, ‘I mean it to be. I’ve got a use for it as will make somebody repent of saying ugly things to me. D——n him!’ he said, ‘he shall rue it.’ I asked him what was the matter. He said, ‘Mind your own business ; you’ve got nothing to do with it. But he shall rue it.’ And he looked as savage as a beast. I never saw such a face ; and he could look cross when he liked, as everybody knows, though he was a good-looking chap when he was pleased.”

“That he was,” said Mary, whose tears still flowed.

“I said, ‘What do you leave that spike of a thing on for?’

“‘That’ll be a stinger,’ he said.

“‘God save us !’ says I. ‘It’s murderous enough without that—cut ‘un off.’ So he cut a piece off, a little bit, and said he’d make a whistle of it.”

“Our Will has made a whistle of it. Where is it, Will ?” The youth produced a whistle from

the mantelpiece. "See," continued Mary, "it fits on t'other beautiful."

"By the holy poker!" said Wads, examining the club again. "I should be sorry to have a blow from that, it would be the death of any one, and that pointed stick would play the devil with ye."

"Ye needn't swear so," said Mary. "Can't ye tell us no more?"

"No. I've so often thought of that stick, and wondered what he meant to do with it, that I haven't forgotten it, or I'm sure, with all the 'ventures I've been in since, I might have forgotten even my own relations."

"Who do you think had angered poor Will?"

"I do not know. But I suppose he met with more than his match, for it seems he fought, and his stick was of no use to him."

"We never heard of any one having seen him, or fought with him, or been hurt," said John Ferner, "and I don't suppose there's any one but Mary and me as remembers anything about it now. Will, here, never heard of it, did ye, Will?"

“Noa,” said the youth.

Wads then made a few inquiries about the neighbourhood. Mr. Askham and Mr. Dale were at York. The old woman on the Common was dead before he left. He had forgotten about “Mother Pendle,” and said he thought one old woman was much the same as another, and cared nothing for the wondrous tales they told him about her being “a lady born.”

The story of Will Stokes was revived for a day or two at Woodnaston, and then was forgotten again.

But Farmer Giles, when he heard of Wads’ story of the holly club, gave some of his accustomed groans, which might mean anything, but were unheeded by those who heard them.

CHAPTER XVII.

BUSINESS AT YORK.

LETTERS passed to and from Messrs. Gregorie the London bankers. The senior partner, who had chiefly had the management of Mistress Ann Lystone's affairs, had long been dead, and all the information the surviving partner of that period could give, was, that on the death of her only child, Edgar Lystone (who survived his father, John Lystone, Ann's husband), she had withdrawn her account, leaving no further clue except that for better convenience to herself she had put her affairs into the hands of Messrs. Trueman, solicitors, of York ; and that £500 had been invested by her in the funds in the name of herself and her child, Edgar Lystone, after the death of her uncle, the Honourable Edgar Thurlestone. The trustees for the sum of £5000 left her by her uncle had either resigned or died, and no others had been appointed.

Mr. Askham and Mr. Dale therefore went to York to find Messrs. Trueman. They found the name of the firm, but the representatives were young men, sons and nephews of the former partners, and knew but little of Mistress Ann Lystone. Mr. Askham explained to them his position with regard to her affairs, showing them her letter. Messrs. Trueman said there was a box with her name, which contained some old papers, and they had it brought out to be examined. The papers were looked over, but there was no evidence that any dividends from the £500 invested in the funds had been drawn. There was no record of the £5000, but there were the title-deeds of a field that had been bought.

One of the partners said that his father, a very aged man, who no longer attended to the business, had been employed by the Becklea family in his younger days, and perhaps could remember something about her affairs, or give Mr. Askham some advice as to further research. He added, if his visitor would wait till he should ascertain if his father was well enough to see him, he would return and inform him.

The old man, though very infirm, and as a rule

appearing to take no interest in anything that occurred, when told by his son that two gentlemen were making inquiries concerning a member of the Becklea family, suddenly roused himself and begged to see them; for there were several matters he would like to speak about.

Accordingly, Mr. Askham and Mr. Dale went to him. They found a very aged man seated in an arm-chair, propped up with pillows, his legs covered with blankets, in front of the fire, though it was a hot day. He had clear, quick hazel eyes and an intelligent face; a few long white hairs straggled from under a velvet cap, and were tied behind with a broad black ribbon, as the last remains of a pigtail. The old man welcomed them with evident pleasure, and mumbled something, making a sign, which they understood was to beg them to be seated. Mr. Askham took a chair, and placing it close to him, began to speak in a loud voice, as to a deaf person.

The old man put both hands to his ears and shouted also as well as he could—

“I am not deaf, sir, but my speech is somewhat bad.”

Mr. Askham then told him what was the object of this visit. He found that with attention he could understand the mumbling, but it was evidently a great effort for the old man to speak much, and during Mr. Askham's narration indicated by nods his comprehension of the subject.

On Mr. Askham's asking him what help he could afford in the search he was making, the old gentleman said—

“ This, sir, is not a common case. After the lapse of so many years it is difficult to identify one person with another. Mistress Ann Lystone was, as you have heard, a client of mine; not exactly a client either. I had known and been employed so many years by her family, that all I gladly did for her I did as a matter of friendship. It is some years now since I heard of or from her. I know not what has become of her. All my communications with her of later years have been through a Mistress Ann Pendle, of Ulsford, in Cumberland. I do not know who this Mistress Pendle was, for all I had to do with her was to address my letters or parcels under cover to her at Ulsford,

with no other address ; and Mistress Ann Lystone wrote to tell me when I should send my letters, and I know that she received them, for I have her acknowledgments.” Then turning to a drawer in the table close by, he took out a bundle of letters. “ Here they are. You, sir, are entitled to examine them, but you will see they give no date, or indication as to her residence, and bear only the date of the Ulsford postmark, and I am entirely ignorant as to her place of residence at that period.”

“ Can you assign any reason for her silence on the subject ? ” asked Mr. Askham.

“ She never gave me any reason for it ; but I am induced to believe some reports as to the bad treatment she met with from some members of her husband’s family, if not from himself, and these may be the cause of her hiding herself in some secluded place.”

“ Did you know any of the Lystones ? ”

“ I knew *of* them, but no one cared to know them for themselves.”

“ Were they well known in York ? ”

“ One named Tom was well known. He was a bad fellow ; he was an elder brother to John,

who married Miss Thurlestane, and I believe caused her much anxiety. John was not a bad fellow, but very weak in disposition as well as in health. He died many years ago ; and Tom is dead too, but he outlived his brother ; and I verily believe Mrs. John Lystone, with all her spirit and determination, was much in fear of him. She has told me how he threatened her ; and once, when her husband was absent from home, she came to me for refuge. Ah, I was sorry for her ! She was not fitted to be with such a rough set ; she ought never to have married beneath her in that way ; so many good offers as she of course had, she should have taken a gentleman of her own standing. They say she married John Lystone out of spite, but I can't believe it ; though what there was in him, poor reckless creature, for her to like no one could see. It broke her father's heart ; and Mrs. Thurlestane, her stepmother, who loved her as her own child, was never the same after."

" This," said Mr. Askham to Mr. Dale, " very much corroborates what Mrs. Page wrote." Then he turned to the old man and asked, " Do you at all know who ' Pendle ' was, or how

Mrs. Ann Lystone came to call *herself* by that name?"

"No, sir; except to hide herself, as it were, from her persecutor, Tom Lystone, I could frame no reason for her change of name, nor should I for a minute have thought her capable of doing so had I not seen your letter from her. I never heard of her marrying again, though to be sure she might have done so; but then, why keep the name of Lystone? I have some parcels of hers, by the bye. I have had them some years —they were the last she sent me. She always begged me to keep them together by me till they were wanted."

"I shall be glad to have them," said Mr. Askham; "perhaps they may contain the 'certain conditions' of her will."

"Pray, sir," said Mr. Trueman, "may you be any relation to a Mr. Askham of Woodnaston Hall, who used often to be in York in former years?"

"He was my father."

"Indeed, sir; but he had a son much more like him than you are, except for stature."

"Yes, my brother William. He fell in

battle before my father died ; and I alone am left.”

“ Then, sir, do you happen to know anything of Mistress Ann Pendle of Ulsford, which is not far, I take it, from your place ? ”

“ I only know that my father let a cottage to one of that name, on Woodnaston Common, who was the person from whom I received that letter. She was lost in the snow about that date, or not many weeks after, as far as we can guess. She commonly went by the name of ‘ Mother Pendle,’ as I have already told you.”

“ It is very odd,” said the old man. “ I should like to have seen her ; I should have known at once if she had been a Thurlestane, for the likeness to the family was strong in her.”

“ So said I,” put in Mr. Dale, “ when I saw the family miniatures.”

“ Ah ! ” said the old man, shaking his head.

“ Can you tell us, sir,” asked Mr. Dale, “ what was her general costume ? ”

“ Well, sir,” replied Mr. Trueman, rather surprised, “ much the same as that of other people. Her dress when I saw her latterly was very inferior, as a matter of course, to what it was

before she married, but always neat and clean. But why do you ask?"

"Her dress was very different to that of other people as she appeared at Ulsford and Wood-naston."

"Indeed, sir! In what did it differ?"

"It was," said Mr. Dale, "the dress that might have been worn a century ago."

"H'm! indeed!" said Mr. Trueman, in a doubting way. Then after a pause he added, "Her appearance, gentlemen, was at all times that of a lady. She never lost her gracefulness, although ever so poorly attired. You could tell at once that she was well bred and born by her courtly manners, which even amounted to dignity at times, notwithstanding she was so small in stature."

"Will you," said Mr. Askham, "give some account of her appearance?"

"Her chief characteristics were a good carriage and pretty little figure, beautiful little hands and feet, and a rather plain face. Her mouth was too large, and she had a way of opening it wide when going to speak, which was the only blemish in her otherwise faultless

bearing. She had good eyes of a dark grey colour, the lustrous brown hair of the Thurlestones, a most pleasing expression of face, and fascinating manners. These were all points that no one could help observing. Do any of them tally with ‘Mother Pendle’?”

“Yes,” said Mr. Dale, “almost all. But at her advanced age the lustrous hair was wanting, and the loss of teeth drew in her large mouth. The expression of her face too, though creating an interest in her, was a little hard.”

“Her misfortunes would make that difference,” said the old man.

“But what about her dress? Where could she have picked up that? It was most peculiar.”

“No doubt it, like her silence concerning her abode, was to prevent recognition,” said Mr. Trueman. “I know of no peculiarity of dress that she could have adopted, and certainly when I have seen her she wore nothing remarkable. But I am sorry to say, gentlemen, I am getting very weary, and I must ask your forgiveness for saying so.” He then took up some papers and turned to Mr. Askham. “Here, sir,” he said,

"are the papers. I should like to know what they contain, at your leisure, sir. I would ask you to look them over here, but I am too weak to bear more excitement. I am eighty-eight years old, gentlemen, and fast going to my grave; but if I can see her affairs set right I shall be glad, for old respect to her family and herself."

Mr. Askham put together the packets, and with Mr. Dale took leave of the old man.

CHAPTER XVIII.

AGAIN AT MR. TRUEMAN'S.

MR. ASKHAM and Mr. Dale suggested to Messrs. Trueman, the lawyers, the next time they went to their office, that they should be permitted again to examine the papers in the box at their house, in order to refer to them in case of need. This was agreed to, and the box was brought into a private room.

The first paper they opened was a deed for the purchase of a field called the “Willow Close,” on the banks of the Ouse, in the names of Mrs. Ann Lystone and Edgar Lystone, her son.

Mr. Thomas Trueman, the old lawyer's son, said he knew the field had belonged to Mrs. John Lystone, but it was a very long time since they had received any rent for it for her; and they did not know what she had done about it. They did not suppose any one could have bought it without their knowledge. He added

that the Corporation wanted to buy the field, but as the said owners, Ann and Edgar Lystone, could not be found, although advertized for, this could not be done. In the mean time the field had become like waste ground ; any one who liked turned their donkeys in to graze.

He suggested that if his father was well enough to see Mr. Askham and Mr. Dale, they should again question him on the subject. They agreed to this arrangement, and said they would put themselves at his disposal.

Mr. Askham asked him if he knew anything about Tom Lystone, who the old man had said was Mrs. John Lystone's persecutor. He answered that it was a subject his father got angry about, and therefore he did not interfere in it. At the same time, he said it had appeared a great relief to his father to have had a conversation with Mr. Askham, and several times during that evening the old man had said he was glad to get it off his mind, he had waited so long to find some one to confer with on the subject. He was, however, greatly exhausted after the interview.

It was two days before Mr. Askham and Mr.

Dale were summoned to the old man's chamber. They found him in the same position as before ; but though the room was so hot they felt almost stifled, they remained there above two hours, looking over papers which the old man took from a drawer in his secretary. Many were letters from Ann Lystone to himself, principally telling him when and where to write to her, and always desiring the utmost secrecy.

"There was not much occasion," he said, "for her to impose secrecy on me ; for, poor lady, I had reason to believe, though she never said so, that she was sorely persecuted by that villain Tom Lystone, who could so intimidate John as to make him fall into his plots to rob and annoy her by threats and lies of any sort. I suppose a weaker or more slavish fellow than John would be difficult to find, except amongst the demented. What she, a lady born and bred, and naturally as proud as any of her class, could find, even to tolerate, in John Lystone, much less to induce her to take him for her companion through life, I never could understand. It was said she did it to spite some old lover who had deserted her, but I never could believe it."

Mr. Askham here asked if Mr. Trueman knew what money she had.

"I should think, sir," was the reply, "very little was left of all she had inherited, which would have been a nice little sum if it had been kept together. The field that was bought in her own and her boy's name swallowed up the £300 she wrote me her great-uncle had sent her for some plate; but what has become of the boy or herself, or who possesses the field now, I do not know."

"We went to look at the field yesterday," said Mr. Askham, "and a more desolate and barren-looking spot I never saw. I asked a person there if he could tell me to whom it belonged; and he said, 'To nobody; the Mayor wants it, but there's nobody to sell it.'"

The old man, still hunting about amongst the effects in the drawer, which was deep, drew out a paper-covered parcel, and said, "This, sir, is a parcel she sent me, saying it contained a few personal ornaments, and on no account was I to let it come to Tom Lystone's knowledge that she or I possessed them. With your leave, sir, we will open it."

It contained many valuable things rolled up in the smallest compass ; one in a box having a miniature set in brilliants.

"This is as like her as possible," remarked the old man ; "it was no doubt her portrait when a girl," and he held it up to look at it. "Do you see any likeness, gentlemen, to the person who called herself Ann Pendle ?" he asked.

They both said there was a certain resemblance. "But," added Mr. Dale, "there is a miniature of her (the Lady Ann's) father which has a strong likeness to the old lady as we remember her in her later years, allowing, of course, for the difference between a very young man and an old woman. Her features in old age were more strongly marked, and the expression keener and more stern than in this ring portrait."

"That would naturally be the case," observed Mr. Trueman, "after all the misadventures of her life ; but to any one who had known her in her youth this one would be a striking likeness."

There was a breast-pin with a miniature of a gentleman, also set in diamonds.

"This is without doubt the old Earl, her

grandfather ; and a very good likeness it is," said Mr. Trueman. " Ah, I knew him well, and respected him much. He was very good to me."

There were other miniatures set as lockets,—one of them, Mr. Trueman said, being the likeness of the old Countess Caroline, the Lady Ann's grandmother,—as well as brooches, necklaces, bracelets, and earrings, all packed as closely together as possible.

"They were most likely taken out of their cases to be packed in this small compass," remarked Mr. Dale.

"No doubt, sir," said Mr. Trueman, "that she might carry them with her for security. I will," he added, addressing Mr. Askham, "if you please, sir, deliver them all into your charge."

"I scarcely like to have so many valuables in my possession, not knowing to whom they may belong."

"I beg, sir, you will kindly relieve me of them. They are a great responsibility to one of my advanced age. My sons even do not know that I have them. I shall be glad too, sir, if you will take all these papers also." Here he paused, but presently continued—"I shall be

happy," he said, "to give you any information I can, in answer to questions from you, but I cannot burden my mind with recollections unless some help is given me. I feel everything an exertion ; yet my great wish is to get these affairs of hers settled before I die, which may happen at any time. I do not know the contents of these packets, for she never expressed a wish that I should. She wished to save me trouble, yet have them in my safe-keeping. I believe she was sorely tried."

The old man here lay back in his chair exhausted ; he asked Mr. Dale to ring the bell for him, and as soon as the servant entered the room, Mr. Askham and Mr. Dale took their leave.

A few days after they returned to Wood-naston.

CHAPTER XIX.

MR. ROYLE.

MR. ROYLE, as well as others of the neighbourhood, had been to visit the tomb put up to the memory of “Mother Pendle,” as he persisted in calling her.

“ Pshaw ! what folly ! ” he said to his wife, “ putting up a magnificent white marble tomb to that old tramp, and calling her ‘The Lady Ann’—what’s-her-name. I never can remember that name.”

“ It was put up by a relative,” said his wife.

“ No such thing, Mrs. R. If we are to believe the tomb, she was ‘the last of her race ; ’ so how could she have a relative ? ”

“ She might have on her mother’s side.”

“ There might be on her mother’s side, to be sure. But the saying ‘lie like a tombstone’ may be true with this one. She may have been

only a gipsy or a tramp, for all they've put her as 'my Lady' thingumbob."

"Oh, Jos!" said his wife, "don't talk like that; Mr. Dale would never allow lies to be put on a tomb."

"Well, I shall go and have a chat with the old ladies, and hear what they have to say about it. But I hope *that* Amelia will not be there; she's such a quarrelsome minx, there's no pleasure when she's near."

So he ordered his horse, and set off to pay the Misses Cavendish, "the old ladies," as he called them, a morning visit.

On his arrival he was ushered into the drawing-room, where he found all four of the Misses Cavendish "sitting with their bits of work," as he told his wife, "and Miss Amelia evidently in a bad temper, looking as black as thunder." He was not popular in the neighbourhood, and Amelia Cavendish, who had a special aversion to him, could not restrain its exhibition.

Miss Cavendish greeted him with the courtesy that was natural to her, and said—

"I was so sorry not to see Mrs. Royle when

we called, and to hear that she was laid up ; I hope she is better."

" Yes, thank you, ma'am," Mr. Royle replied, " and I am going to take her to York for the winter, to have a little change, and gaiety ; for every one must allow this is a very dull neighbourhood."

" Dull ! " said Amelia, interrupting him ; " nobody else finds it dull."

" We have not all of us so many delightful occupations as you have, Miss Amelia."

" Delightful occupations ! well, I suppose they are to me. But no one need be dull or idle unless they like."

" Amelia, dear sister," said Miss Cavendish, " will you kindly leave off your work whilst we are talking ; the thrumming noise on the frame-stretched cloth is painful."

" Yet, Selina, I have worked all the morning, and you said nothing."

" But *now*, dear Amelia." Then, addressing Mr. Royle, she continued, " So you are going to York for the winter. We may probably do the same, and for the same reason, for the society of our old friends."

“ We used to go to Bath before we came here, and very pleasant it was.”

“ What a pity you ever came away from it,” observed Amelia.

“ Amelia, dear sister ! ” said Miss Cavendish.

“ Yes, Selina, I know what you mean. Charlotte, remember we have to go to Woodnaston to-day. We shall be away some little time, Selina, for I want to take a proper sketch of the new tomb in the churchyard.”

“ Ah,” said Mr. Royle, “ it is worthy of a drawing. It is the handsomest thing of the sort, short of Carlisle.”

“ The inscription surprised us all,” said Miss Cavendish.

“ Yes, indeed,” he replied ; “ to find that *that old woman* was my ‘Lady Ann ! ’ I can scarcely credit it.”

“ Well,” said Amelia, “ you need not talk so disrespectfully. We all hope to be old women some day.”

“ I don’t,” said he, very quietly. So quietly indeed as to force a smile to brighten Amelia’s cross face.

"No," said Charlotte, "we will exclude you from the wish."

The footman came in to know if the carriage was wanted.

"Yes, immediately," answered Charlotte. Then, addressing Mr. Royle, she said, "I am so sorry to be obliged to run away, for I have several things to ask you about; but I must go."

"Cannot you come to us to-morrow for luncheon?" he asked.

"With pleasure," she replied; "good-bye," and with Amelia she left the room.

"The sunshine in Miss Charlotte's face makes every one happy," Mr. Royle remarked, as soon as the two sisters were gone.

"Yes," said Miss Jane, "she has a sweet temper, and is quite our right hand." Miss Jane always identified herself with her elder sister.

"What about this tomb, ma'am?" Mr. Royle said, addressing Miss Cavendish.

"It is still somewhat of a mystery. I cannot tell you much about it—in fact, I dare say you know more than we do."

"Indeed, Askham and Dale have kept all things so uncommon secret, there's no knowing anything."

"No doubt they have their reasons for doing so."

"It is so many years since the old 'Lady,' I suppose I must call her, died. How did they find her out at last?"

"It was through a gentleman who came to visit the Askhams."

"Was he a relation of hers?"

"I think not; but at any rate he knew her, I suppose intimately, in former years."

"I remember seeing the old rubbish in her hut being taken away by Askham's people; and he said at the time, when I suggested they had better make a bonfire of it all, that he could not do that, as there might be some one to claim it."

"Ah, yes, and he advertised several times," interposed Miss Jane.

"I certainly could scarcely imagine such trash could belong to one who could be called 'my Lady'; but she was evidently a miser, and I advised Askham to dig up the place and all

round the cottage for treasure, but he again said, No."

"Some part round the cottage was dug up to prevent others doing so."

"That, Jane, was to make a garden to keep her favourite rose-tree in."

"And which I broke!" said Mr. Royle. "I was sorry for that, for Mrs. Askham's sake, as she wanted to preserve it. But it has grown again plentifully, as we may see. They must have found money amongst her effects, for she was never wanting for guineas and pound-notes."

"In process of time, no doubt, we shall know more. Hers is probably a romantic story," said Miss Cavendish.

"Of unrequited love!" returned Mr. Royle, laughing. "But who was 'Pendle'? She was married, for she wore her ring. Did you know any one of that name, ma'am?"

"No."

"Why is the name not put on her tomb?"

"I do not know."

"How was she recognized as the 'Lady Ann'?"

“ By a miniature she had, which, as I understood, was one of herself, and her exact image. But neither Mr. Askham nor Mr. Dale seemed quite to realize the story ; and it was at Colonel Llewellyn’s request that the tomb was erected, and at his sole expense, I believe.”

“ I’m sorry Askham would not follow my suggestion to dig for treasure.”

“ One of her apparent birth would hardly resort to such a practice. If you can recall her, you may easily recognize that she was no common person. The few words she spoke were those of one educated, and her manner of walking equally so.”

“ Ah, yes, I do remember her walk. She walked right well, and she’d good ankles too ; but I never talked with her—the most I said was ‘ Good morrow, mother,’ to which I got no answer but a sort of grunt.”

“ She seldom spoke to any one, I have heard. She would not come to see our garden, though she was so fond of flowers.”

“ Even if she had been ‘ my Lady Ann ’ it would not have hurt her to do that, and if she was only ‘ Mother Pendle ’ she ought

to have been much flattered by your asking her."

"She was a most independent person," said Miss Cavendish, "and evidently much too refined to be flattered. She was always a puzzle to me ; she kept aloof from every one, and yet she was so solitary ! Other people of any rank, whether rich or poor, have friends to whom they speak when they meet ; but I have watched her when coming out of church, and she never spoke to any one. Once, as she passed us, we were a group of neighbours with the Dales and Askhams, all conversing together at the church gate, she gave a deep sigh as she passed us ; and that was the only indication I ever heard from her of her being more than a *figure*, almost an automaton, passing by. She took no notice of any one."

"She was, and is, a perfect riddle," said Mr. Royle.

"So I hear we are likely to have Mr. Prozer again. Mr. Dale has asked him to take his duty during his absence."

"Is Dale going away for any length of time ? "

"I have not heard, but it is probable he may be called away."

"Prozer is an excellent fellow ; and if he would only cut his sermons short by half an hour, I, for one, should be glad to see him back."

"In my young days, and his," said Miss Cavendish, "long sermons were considered to be meritorious. On occasions they would even reach to an hour and a half. And I quite well remember, as a child, waking up from a long dream during the sermon, looking at the clock, and saying out loud, 'Why, it is past dinner-time.'"

Mr. Royle laughed. "I have heard my father say in our little country church it was no uncommon thing to hear a few deep snores, and that most of the country people were asleep from the text onwards."

"I am glad it is no longer the case, it was very irreverent," said Miss Jane.

Mr. Royle returned home and told his wife he "could get nothing from the old ladies, they were as close as wax," and he could not think why there should be such a mystery about "that old woman."

"Well, Jos, but what does it signify about her? She is nothing to us."

“ ‘ Nothing to us,’ no ; but it is so provoking to have so many mysteries at one’s door. And—ah—Charlotte is coming here to luncheon to-morrow.”

“ I am so glad ; I do love Charlotte. Why is she coming ? ”

“ To try and get somebody out of a scrape, I suppose. That is her general errand ; that is—she will want me to do so for her.”

“ About some boys stealing apples perhaps ; there was a gang of them caught the other day.”

“ Oh dear ! it’s a weary life, this, Mrs. R. I shall be glad when we go to York.”

“ It will be better there than it was at Bath, at any rate.”

“ One is about as good to us as the other ; but there are higher people at York, Mrs. R., and that’s what we want.”

“ No we don’t. They don’t care for us.”

“ But they will.”

“ No they won’t. We were much happier at Claytown, amongst our own people ! ” And the tears came into her eyes.

CHAPTER XX.

THE WILL.

SOME little time after Mr. Askham and Mr. Dale had returned home, the post-bag had a double letter for the former. On opening it, he found it was from Mr. Thomas Trueman. It was as follows :—

“ SIR,

“ I beg to enclose you another letter, found by my father in his private secretary yesterday while searching for further documents relative to Mistress Ann Lystone. He knew he must have a packet of later date than those already put into your hands by him, but he could not recollect where he had placed it for security, which at his great age is not a matter of surprise. This he believes to be about the last that he received from her, and no doubt the date will verify his assertion. He sends you her letter to him, as

well as her enclosure. Her letter, he says, distressed him very much, for he knew of no help to offer her.

“I am, sir,

“Your obedient servant,

“THOMAS TRUEMAN.

“*St. Olaf's Row, York.*”

Mr. Askham immediately sent for Mr. Dale, and on his arrival gave him the letter to read ; and the two afterwards opened the packet. Ann's letter to Mr. Trueman was read first. It was of an earlier date than her letter to Mr. Askham, and ran as follows :—

“DEAR MR. TRUEMAN,

“I again trouble you with a packet to keep for me till it may be required—that will be after my death. It contains, as far as I know at present, my last wishes. I feel old age is creeping upon me, and it is well that I relieve you of all responsibility about my small possessions, by naming what I should like done with them in the event of my death. Circumstances may yet occur to oblige me again to alter my plans ; but until then will you kindly keep the enclosed—

secretly, if you please ; for you know how wary I have to be.

“ God bless you, dear Mr. Trueman, for all your goodness to me. You are the only friend I have to look to for help. There is no one else I can trust. I cannot express to you what forebodings I have of some evil to come ; shadows that present themselves to my mind which are altogether beyond my comprehension. Oh, if I had but some one at hand to confer with—my solitude is so great. The last of my family—no one to come to me—and I cannot even go to York, where I might see you ! I have made my fate a sad one indeed ! But for this spot being my Edgar’s choice, and for a recollection that comes before me, I could not remain in my present abode ; everything oppresses me ; the solitude, the howling storms—— But why, to ease my own mind for a moment, should I burden you with a recital of my woes ? Good-bye, dear Mr. Trueman. Never can I adequately express my gratitude to you for all your goodness to me. Adieu, I am ever,

“ Yours very sincerely and affectionately,

“ ANN LYSTONE.”

Mrs. Askham was in tears during the reading of this letter.

"Oh, George!" she said, "how terrible it is that we cannot know the sorrows of those so near us, that we cannot alleviate their distress."

"Yes, my love, this is a sad story, but, as we have so often said, hers was a case utterly beyond reach of our sympathy." Then after a while he added, "We must open this letter, Dale. Will you read it?"

"With pleasure;" and he read as follows:—

"DEAR MR. TRUEMAN,

"I wish to tell you what I shall like done with the little I possess.

"I have £500 in the funds invested in my name, Ann Lystone, and my child's name, Edgar Lystone, the dividends of which have never been drawn.

"I have the meadow called 'the Willow Close,' on the Ouse, near York, which was also bought in my name, Ann Lystone, and my child's, Edgar Lystone. This I wish to be sold or let according as my executors may see fit.

“The money proceeds of this meadow, and that which will have accumulated in the funds from the dividends not having been drawn, added to the principal, which I request may be sold out, I leave to be used in building and endowing a small hospital and girls’ school in the neighbourhood of Woodnaston, near Ulsford, Cumberland ; and I appoint Mr. George Askham of Woodnaston Hall, and the Reverend Alan Dale, Rector of Woodnaston, my executors and trustees for the said hospital and girls’ school, to which I hope they will not object, but will kindly carry out my wishes.

“I wish the hospital and school to be near together, and to be called ‘The Thurlestane Buildings.’

“All details I leave to the taste and discretion of the said Mr. Askham and Mr. Dale.

“The hospital I wish may relieve Mr. Dale from the tramps and poor travellers or others, whom he so benevolently now takes under his own charge.

“The entire management of the hospital and school to be under the Squire of Woodnaston

and the Rector of Woodnaston for ever, or those whom they may appoint.

“ I beg your acceptance, dear Mr. Trueman, of the ivory Chinese pagoda, given me by my great-uncle Edgar, and the miniature of my grandfather, Lord Becklea, set in brilliants as a breast-pin, and which belonged to my grandmother. You will find it amongst the jewels I sent to your care. I hope you will keep it for their sakes and mine, as a small token of respect and affection for your long and faithful services to them, and my own gratitude for your great goodness to me.

“ I hope Mr. Dale will accept my old and rare edition of Chaucer ; and I bequeath to Mr. Dale and to Mrs. Dale, his wife, the two finger rings which are tied together with a black ribbon amongst the jewels in your care. One is of brilliants, the other rubies. Mrs. Dale will please accept the one of the two she likes best as a token of my appreciation of her friendly feeling towards me.

“ To Miss Cavendish of Ravenscrag Manor, near Woodnaston, I bequeath a ruby ring set

with brilliants, wrapped in a blue paper, also amongst the jewels. I beg her acceptance of it as a token of my friendship, and acknowledgment of the kindness she would have shown me had I been able to receive it.

“To Mrs. Askham of Woodnaston Hall I bequeath, with many loving thanks for her good will towards me, all other of my personal ornaments and jewels. To the forefinger ring with a miniature set in diamonds I specially ask her attention. It is a portrait of myself when a girl, and belonged to my grandmother; perhaps she may still trace a likeness to me in my old age.

“To Farmer Giles of the Fellside Farm, and his wife, I give a Chinese-man toy, with my kind remembrances for their kind attention to me.

“And to Mr. Askham of Woodnaston Hall I bequeath everything else I possess, making him my residuary legatee, begging him to burn all papers and letters that may be of no use to himself as acting for me.

“This, dear Mr. Trueman, is my last will and testament. But that explanations are requisite in my case, I would have shortened it by half.

“Accept my loving affection, and believe me ever,

“Your grateful friend,

“ANN CAROLINE EDITHA LYSTONE,
known at Woodnaston as Ann Pendle, or Mother
Pendle.

“Thus you have my adopted name of late
years, and my place of residence, which I have
had to keep secret, even from you, dear Mr.
Trueman, so many years.

“Alas! the fate I made for myself!

“A. L.

“*Woodnaston Common, near Ulsford.*”

“This letter, or will, for it is both, ought to have been read in the presence of Mr. Trueman, especially as it is addressed to him,” observed Mr. Askham.

“Yes,” replied Mr. Dale, “he must read it before it is proved. It is altogether informal, and might give us trouble.”

“So here we have full proof of her being ‘Mother Pendle.’ Poor dear, I am so sorry for her. I wonder why she chose that name,” remarked Mrs. Askham. “How very singular

that she should make you her heir, George. I can't think why she should have done so. And why should she leave me all her jewels? We were never intimate with her; nor can I think we were ever very kind to her. Can you think of any reason for her doing so?"

"No, my love, I am as much at a loss as you are to assign a reason for her actions. And I am quite surprised to find she is possessed of so much money. The accumulated money in the funds may amount to a good sum."

"And," said Mr. Dale, "the meadow near York, though it looks so barren now, may prove of great value for building sites."

"She was a wonderful person. I am quite anxious to see the ring portrait she has so kindly left me. Ah, and dear Ivor, how pleased he will be to see it. George, I think I must offer it to him. If she had been a scribbler, and kept a journal, how satisfactory it would have been to us, and no doubt to him, to have known some of her history."

"It may have been too painful to commit to paper," said Mr. Dale. "Her married life was evidently not a happy one."

"Don't you think, Mr. Dale, we ought to search more diligently amongst her papers? Do you think, George, we have looked them all over?"

"I really do not know, my love, but your suggestion is good."

"Yes," said Mr. Dale, "now that we have found out so much about her history, our search will be of a different sort. It will have an interest where none appeared before."

"I will write to Ivor; he must try and come to us again."

"This involves another journey to York, Dale, and it is getting late in the year."

"We had better go at once; we have plenty of work before us."

CHAPTER XXI

TO YORK IN THE WINTER.

MR. ASKHAM and Mr. Dale set out on their journey to York one winter's day, hoping to get there before the snow came to impede their progress ; this they effected.

They at once went to Mr. Trueman's. They found him seated in his usual place, looking even more feeble than when they had last seen him. They gave him the letter to himself, which was also Ann's will. This he read with much attention, observing, with a voice broken with sobs, that the gratitude expressed by her for the little he had been able to do for her quite over-powered him. He begged them to get the will proved without delay, for he wished to see her wishes accomplished, and every day felt his end approaching nearer and nearer. He begged their forgiveness for saying he could see them no longer that day ; he was quite exhausted, but

hoped to see them when the will was proved, or sooner if they required his assistance. This was all that passed.

When the will was at length proved, the executors soon heard about the "Willow Close." The municipal authorities were still seeking to get possession of it ; it had become indispensable to them ; and on replying to a second advertisement, the trustees had a very satisfactory interview with the Mayor and Corporation, who offered a handsome sum for it. But to carry out the plans for the future "Thurlestane Buildings" a larger sum was required even than the Corporation offered ; so, according to Mr. Truemans advice, a portion of the field was let to them on very advantageous terms.

Mr. Askham, on their next visit, brought with him from Woodnaston the packet of jewels, and the ivory pagoda. The packet was opened in Mr. Truemans presence, the breast-pin taken out, and it and the pagoda presented to him. But the old man was loth to receive them at first ; he thought them too costly.

"The Lady Ann did not think so," said Mr. Askham ; "she wished you to have them."

"I am glad, sir," said the other, "to hear you call her so ; and I would suggest that henceforth she be called solely by that name."

"Be it so," was the joint reply of Mr. Askham and Mr. Dale.

The old man looked stronger than on their preceding visit, and was busily engaged in pulling rolls of paper out of a drawer when they entered. He now resumed his occupation, and at last said, "Ah !—I thought I must have something more of hers—and here it is." He then handed a parcel to Mr. Askham, saying, "Will you do me the favour to open it, sir."

Mr. Askham opened it, and found another parcel inside, on which was written, "Some of my memorandums." He read this out loud, and the old man said, "Yes, sir, thank you ; this was the packet I received from her before the letters I last sent you ; and this I verily believe to be the only remaining packet I have of hers. And I must tell you, gentlemen, how much obliged I am to you for relieving me of them ; they have been a source of anxiety and care to me, especially since she ceased to tell me when and *where* to write to her, as she always had

done. Little did I imagine that death, and in so terrible a way, was the cause of her silence, dear lady ! ”

They then conversed for a short time about the will, and their projects in carrying out her plans.

“ I shall give a part of the Common for the sites,” said Mr. Askham.

“ The cottage where she lived, sir, would be an appropriate piece,” suggested Mr. Trueman.

“ You are right,” replied Mr. Askham. “ When the Spring comes I must seek for an architect. Do you know of any that you can recommend, Mr. Trueman ? ”

“ Yes, sir, we have in this city one or two who are considered able in their profession. There is Mr. Corbel—and Mr. Lyne—both efficient men. Mr. Corbel is more ecclesiastic in his taste than Mr. Lyne.”

“ Yes,” said Mr. Dale, “ I should prefer Lyne’s models and plans for our purpose. What do you say, Askham ? ”

“ I do not know either of them.”

“ The meadow will be most valuable to the city,” said the old man, reverting to a former

part of their conversation ; “a wharf in that direction is so much wanted. I should advise you, gentlemen, not to sell the field, but let it. It may be a little difficult in the management at first, but you will require all the increasing value it may acquire.”

“We will follow your advice,” said Mr. Askham. Then, having obtained the addresses of the architects, the two visitors prepared to leave, but not without asking if they should leave the plans of the proposed buildings for the old gentleman’s inspection. Mr. Trueman expressed his desire that they should, and his sense of their kindness in proposing to do so.

“But,” he said in conclusion, “I feel I shall not live to see the full accomplishment of her wishes.”

“We will hope for the best,” answered Mr. Dale.

When the street was reached it was decided that the first visit should be to Mr. Lyne. On the way, in turning a corner, the two friends came face to face with Mr. Royle.

“Hey ! Askham !” he said ; “who’d a thought

of meeting you and Dale in the ‘purloins’ (as Prince William is said to express himself) of this city?”

“We might ask the same of you,” he replied, smiling.

“I’ve been attending one of the public meetings. And such a talk there has been of the old woman’s property! Why she must have been a miser!”

“Whom do you mean?”

“Why ‘Mother Pendle,’ to be sure, or the ‘Lady Ann’—something—I forget what is put on the tomb.”

“She was no miser.”

“Something very like it, to have all that wealth, and live like a beggar.”

“‘All that wealth’ was not much during her lifetime. And I do not think she ever begged of any one. We will talk about this another time, Dale and I are much occupied at this moment.”

“Well, good afternoon then. I should like to hear all about it; you kept it so uncommon close.”

The interview with Mr. Lyne was very satisfactory ; several drawings and plans were shown them, and it was settled that others should be made, so that the building might be commenced as soon as possible in the Spring.

Mr. Askham and Mr. Dale were not so fortunate in the weather on their return home as they had been on their journey to York. They were snowed up amongst the hills and the mails could not pass. It was a very severe winter ; the snow-drifts were frequent and very deep, and they could not stir from the little roadside inn where they were first compelled to stop, for three weeks.

Who can express the anxieties of their families during this period of imprisonment, for not even a letter could be forwarded ! Christmas was passed and the new year begun in the gloomy little inn. Fortunately there was but one other guest besides themselves, or the store of provisions might have failed. By the middle of January, Woodnaston Hall and the Rectory were gladdened by the return of the travellers. Mr. Dale declared there was only one good

thing that had come from their detention in the snow—they had perfectly matured their plans, having had indeed nothing else to attend to during their dreary imprisonment.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE “THURLESTANE BUILDINGS” ARE BEGUN.

IN the Spring Mr. Askham had a portion of the Common marked out for the “Thurlestane Buildings,” and according to Mr. Trueman’s advice, it included the cottage, which was to remain in its original state, with “Mother Pendle’s” own furniture placed in it as in the time she inhabited it. This was all of rustic pattern, of plain oak, except the folding bedstead, which, though of oak too, was of antique form, portions of it being carved. Mrs. Askham begged the straw mattress might remain with its holes, in which the money and keys were found concealed. The cottage and garden, which was to contain principally white roses, formed one side of the square ; the hospital and school two other sides ; and on the remaining side was the lodge and entrance gate. The centre was to be a lawn with evergreens and shrubs, with a wide gravel walk all round.

The plans and drawings were ready, and the first stone was to be laid on the 25th of March. Mrs. Askham had decided that Colonel Llewellyn should perform this part of the ceremony, and he came to the Hall for the purpose, his brother accompanying him. All the neighbourhood were invited to witness the ceremony ; a grand dinner was prepared at the Hall, and Mr. Askham also gave a dinner in the large barn to the farmers' servants and others, where roast beef, plum pudding, and good ale were served in abundance. Mr. Askham and Mr. Dale presided at the tables, and both made appropriate speeches.

Farmer Giles took with him the Chinese toy he had received as a legacy, and begged to be allowed to show it off after the dinner, which he did, to the delight and wonderment of the spectators.

All Ann's gifts to Mr. and Mrs. Askham were displayed in the library to the assembled gentry, and portions of the two wills read to them by Mrs. Askham whilst the dinner in the barn was going on. Miss Cavendish wore the ring she had received, as also did Mrs. Dale ; in fact the latter wore both her rings.

Mr. and Colonel Llewellyn had only arrived two days before, and were as much interested as the other guests in looking over the treasures. The plate was especially admired. The only thing Mrs. Askham kept back was the portrait ring, but she took the opportunity when Mr. and Colonel Llewellyn were not present to show that also. In looking at the portrait Mrs. Askham recognized the double row of large pearls with diamond cross round the neck as the one left to her, and was glad so to identify it. She expressed her surprise that she and her husband should be singled out as the recipients of such costly gifts.

"She had left you plenty of work to do for her," said Mr. Royle.

"She was your tenant," remarked another.

"She took a fancy to you."

"I suppose she had no one else to leave it to."

"You were very kind to her."

Such were the comments ; but no one could imagine the right reason ; even Mr. and Mrs. Askham had not fathomed that matter as yet. It required a deeper search into the mind of the departed than they had yet made.

The next week or so was occupied by all concerned in the plans and foundations of the buildings, and in making the lawn and garden ; for it was intended all was to be finished as nearly as possible at the same time, and Mr. Askham spared no trouble or expense himself to get it well done.

Mr. Lyne gave great satisfaction to his employers, and all would have gone well but for the inattention of the superintendent, who, following his own ideas instead of the plan laid down, made so grave a mistake that part of the school had to be rebuilt, thus causing much delay and extra expense.

The trustees had devoted the sum estimated as the cost of the building to that purpose, but it fell short of the real expenses by nearly half. The extra cost was willingly defrayed by Mr. Askham, in order that the whole of the remainder of Ann's money might be devoted to the endowment.

Colonel Llewellyn begged to be allowed to contribute to its ornamentation. He thought there should be a fountain in the centre of the lawn, for use as well as ornament ; but the diffi-

culty of getting water from higher ground forced him to give up the idea. In that case, he said, he must have an ornamental well, and on the superstructure must be an inscription in honour of the founder of the charity (he was fond of inscriptions). He said there should be a marble bust of her, if a likeness could be found. Mr. Askham said it would be inappropriate to a well, it had better be placed in one of the buildings. Then, replied the Colonel, there should be two, one in each of the buildings, with an inscription. He would give the marble tablet and bust to each. Mr. Dale thought it would be better to place one inside the church, as there was as yet no indication of who “the Lady Ann Thurlestone” was, and it was right that something beyond her maiden name should be known.

The Colonel was puzzled to satisfy every one's wishes. Many designs were drawn and inscriptions written, mostly to be destroyed as soon as finished; he was constantly regretting there was no likeness that might help him. Seeing him thus perplexed, Mrs. Askham thought the moment was come when she could best show him

the ring portrait. She therefore brought it to him one morning, saying—

"Look at this, Ivor. Is this like her?"

He looked at it attentively, and said in a low voice, "It is indeed. It must be herself."

"It is. It was her grandmother's ring. Would you not like to have it?"

"No, Louisa, no. I do not know what her feelings were towards me. She may have cared nothing for me—in fact I do not see how she could even remember me; I never met her but that once, to speak to, and probably she forgot me before the next day, for she had plenty of far more worthy admirers. No, I could not accept it whilst entertaining such a sentiment."

"As you wish, dear Ivor; but I thought you might like to possess it, as you were so deeply attached to her."

"How did you get it?"

"It was amongst her trinkets."

"Did she note it was her portrait?"

"Yes, and said I might recognize in it perhaps some likeness to her in her old age; but I see much more likeness to her in the miniature of

her father. Old age makes a great difference in a face—the features spread, the lines get hard, and the loss of teeth quite alters the expression. The pearl necklace you see is this one exactly," she said, holding up the necklace. "Do you think it like as you remember her?"

"Yes." He took out his pocket-book and drew from it a folded paper. "Here is a rough sketch I made the same night I first saw her. I knew I must be away for years, probably, and feared I might not remember her sufficiently well."

It was a profile in pencil of a face rather plain than otherwise.

"It is more like her as we saw her than this miniature," said Mrs. Askham. "I recognize the straight nose, with a slight depression instead of a bridge. I think your sketch in addition to the miniature might make a good medallion."

"A medallion in marble over the inscription. That is a good idea."

"Yes; what have you written?"

"All sorts of things, but none to my fancy. I have been thinking that it would be best to

have the tablet in the church, with the inscription in Latin."

"So that the vulgar herd should not understand it, eh?" she said, laughing.

"So, Louisa, that people should not exult over her misfortunes."

"Or, dear Ivor, to continue her mystery after her death!"

"No; but I do not like that people should think of her otherwise than as the lady she really was."

"It should be known why she called herself 'Mother Pendle.' I think it is due to her."

"We cannot tell, first of all, why she married that fellow Lystone."

"Do as you like, dear Ivor, there is plenty of time to consider about it."

"It is all still a mystery!"

"It is; but the grand search amongst all her boxes and papers is to be made whilst you are here, and then perhaps we shall be able to solve it."

CHAPTER XXIII.

READING THE JOURNAL.

VERY bad weather set in, with a slight snow-storm and gales of wind. Mr. Llewellyn was anxious to get back to Wales, and only waited for fair weather. Therefore, in order that a thorough search of all Ann's boxes and papers might be made in his presence, everything else was put aside at the Hall for the time. Moreover, as it was desirable all her effects should be placed together, it was decided that the little drawing-room should be devoted to them.

Mr. Askham began by re-examining her desk. He found a drawer at the side, which he had overlooked before, and after some trouble discovered a spring which released it. In it was a folded paper, having round it a strip of paper labelled "memorandums."

"This must refer to the other papers I had from Mr. Trueman, written, 'Some of my memor-

andums.' I shall put it with them ; we will read them to-night."

"Do you not think it would be best to place all her papers in proper order, and set them together in one place ?" said Mr. Dale.

"Certainly. But I think we ought to read these memorandums first of all ; they may make the rest comprehensible. You and Mrs. Dale will be of our party as heretofore, will you not ? Come and dine with us, or come in the evening, as suits you best."

"I cannot come to dinner, but in the evening we will come with pleasure ; and now I must go," looking at his watch, "for I have an appointment."

"Dale has always been my companion in our searches amongst these effects," said Mr. Askham to the Colonel. "When I saw that they contained valuable plate, &c., I could not be without another person as witness, for if heirs had sprung up I should be answerable for everything."

"Assuredly," replied the Colonel, a little astonished at the vehemence of manner, and still more so when Mr. Askham added in a distracted voice—

"Ah, the misery of not having a witness!" and he drew a long sigh.

"George, you had better read those memorandums before you put them aside," said Mrs. Askham.

He opened the paper and said, "It is evidently part of a journal. She refers to the letter she wrote me—lastly to her going to the quarry, and it ends very abruptly. It is a pity to read it till we have the earlier part of the journal."

Mr. and Mrs. Dale came each evening for the reading of the journal.

"This case, sir," said Mr. Dale to Mr. Llewellyn, "has occupied Askham and myself for some years. The difficulty we have had to find out who this old lady was, and her heirs, if any, has been very considerable; but I believe we have ferretted it all out at last. Her sudden death was the cause of it all. No doubt, had she died quietly at home, she would have sent for some one to whom to explain her wishes, and tell something of her history. But her sudden call from earth—lost in the snow—struck us all

with dismay. We did not know she was dead till she was found, certainly more than three weeks after her death, in the quarry."

"It is a sad and romantic history. I am curious to hear her journal read," was the reply.

"Are you all ready?" said Mr. Askham.

"Yes, George, we are all here."

"Then we will read the journal—'Some of my memorandums,' as she calls it. Dale, will you take the papers? You are cleverer than I am at deciphering handwriting."

"I will read them with pleasure."

CHAPTER XXIV.

FAMILY HISTORY.

"My Edgar shall know something of his mother's family and ancestors; for when I am gone who will there be to tell it?"

"Ours was a good old family history; there was a saying that 'there were Thurlestanes from the beginning of the world.' Making due allowance for exaggeration, it is without doubt a very ancient family, settled for hundreds of years on the same spot—Becklea Manor, park and farms—but of which, so far as the name goes and the habitation, there is now no trace, owing to the recklessness of the last earl, to pay whose creditors it was sold, cut up, destroyed!"

"The Thurlestanes had ever been warriors and Royalists. Of the people on the estate, all those who were able fought by the side of their masters in the Wars of the Roses, and followed them to wars abroad, for the Thurlestanes were

warriors in each generation, and every war saw some fall. As these were cut off the family connections became few, for, according to tradition, sons had ever outnumbered daughters.

“The ancient Manor-house at Becklea had been pulled down in the reign of Henry VIth, with the exception of the great hall, the kitchen, and the buttery. It was then enlarged and altered to the fashion of the day, and so remained, continuing to be the family residence, till its final destruction.

“The mansion with its wings surrounded a turfed court. The entrance was by arches on the north side of the quadrangle, and wide galleries, glazed their whole length, led thence to the great hall and reception-rooms ; the great hall being the nearest to the arch entrance, which was so broad that coaches drove under it to the door, and round the porter’s lodge to make their exit by another arch : this arrangement took up the whole of the north side of the quadrangle. There was a large outer court, surrounded by the kitchens, offices, and stables, with open cloisters. It was a noble pile of buildings, and exceeding pleasant in its arrange-

ments. The cellarage was like a crypt of a church, strongly arched, and extended under the great hall and reception - rooms. All visitors were taken to see the cellars.

" The great hall rose to a lantern in the groined roof of the building ; there was a large oriel window on the west side, which was quite a little room of itself, and looked into the garden. As the lantern had a window in each of its four sides, plenty of light was admitted to the hall, and gave it a cheerful look. An enormous fireplace with stone ingle - seats, and very high carved stone mantelpiece, took up a great portion of the north side, on one side of which was the buttery-hatch. The entrance was on the east side. On the south side was the minstrels' gallery, and below it a large carved oak buffet with shelves, on which were arranged the old family brass and pewter circular dishes, of ample proportions to suit the hospitality of ancient days. They were kept as bright as gold and silver, and with their raised-work borders were exceedingly ornamental ; there were also carved wooden platters of equally ancient pattern.

" Very strong and stout carved oak branched

candlesticks were also there, with proportionally stout tallow candles made on the premises, the fashion of which was as ancient as the family ; and well I remember the strong click of the snuffers, which were often required, for the same candles were used on the sideboard of the dining - room in common use. Carved high-backed chairs; broad square chairs with stuffed backs and seats, the arms and legs carved, the seats raised high, and a broad foot-rest ; and oak forms as long as the table, with carved legs, were the seats. A long narrow oak table, which, like the rest, was black with age and constant polishing, occupied the centre of the hall. It was ponderous in its proportions, thick and strong, likely to last any number of centuries, its many thick carved legs looking equal to its support. On the walls were trophies of arms of all ages, many of which had histories attached to them—suits of armour, bannerets, flags, trumpets, drums, and kettle-drums, all in perfect order, for an armourer had always been kept, and continued to hold his place till the death of my Uncle Henry, the last Earl. He had at least that one good quality, that he would have none of the old

customs done away with, and he even insisted on the brass bowls on the buffet being kept full of white roses—the Yorkist emblem—as long as they were to be had; and also that there should be plenty of the rose-bushes kept in the garden. Whether he was at Becklea or not, this had to be attended to.

“ The reception-rooms were full of large full-length portraits of Lords and Ladies in Court dresses, by well-known artists of their day. The greater part of these came from Pendlebury Castle, in Cornwall, one of the estates belonging to the wife of the third Earl of Becklea. She was the only child and heiress of the last Duke of St. Ives. Before she came into the family, the Thurlsetanes had a few portraits of Kings and Queens, but none of their own family, save a rough sketch of Sir William Thurlestane, Knight, *temp.* James I. The galleries also had some Pendlebury portraits, grim-looking men and women, and some landscapes; but all the best pictures were naturally in the best rooms. The dining-room was furnished with carved oak, somewhat in the style of the great hall, but of more modern date. The sideboard was well carved in

fruit and flowers, and the high-backed chairs in roses and scrolls. The table also was of oak, and very massive. The room was panelled with carved oak, and the cornices and borders gilt ; the heavy curtains of crimson cloth were like those in the great hall, and all the seats and cushions were of the same.

“ The furniture in the drawing-room was gilt, fitted up with yellow embossed satin from China ; the curtains were of the same thick satin, it seemed to be satin on both sides. All these luxuries and ornamentations were brought into the family by the heiress of the Duke of St. Ives, from her estates ; before her arrival the Thurlestanes had been plain, but wealthy. Warriors only, arms, not luxury, had been their calling, but the latter had crept into their habits through the courtier life of the first Earl.

“ The most noted of the older family, as far as tradition says, was Sir William Thurlestane, Knight, in Queen Elizabeth and James I.’s time. He had married the daughter of a Welsh gentleman, whom he met whilst with his regiment in North Wales ; they had five sons. The old knight at the time of the battle of Marston

Moor had been some years a widower, and too frail in health to join the King's army. His three eldest sons, however, with their followers and retainers, were there, and they all three fell in the battle, fighting nearly side by side. He could hear the noise of the battle as he sat on the terrace, not able to walk, anxiously awaiting news of the result. A horse-keeper to his sons brought him the sad news of the rout of the Royal army.

"He never recovered that day ; he grieved for the loss of the King's cause as much—some say more—as for his brave sons ; and the final shock of 'the murder of the King,' as he termed it, and his betrayal by the Scotch, preying much upon his mind, was the chief cause of his death ; he survived but a short time. The younger sons were mere youths at the time of the battle of Marston Moor, too young to bear arms, and they remained with their father. The elder succeeded to the estates, and the younger eventually followed the fortunes of the exiled Prince, afterwards King Charles II. All the ready money, and much of the proceeds of the property, were absorbed by this 'following ;' the usual case

with those who were about the persons of the Stuarts. Large sums of money were sent to the Prince, never to be returned, and Edgar Thurlestone was much impoverished. He continued at Court when the King regained his Throne, and was first created Viscount Thurlestane, and a short time after, Earl of Becklea. He married Miss Torrington of Hereford, whose acquaintance he had made whilst with the King's army. The second and third Earls were his sons. Charles, the third Earl, was he who married the heiress of the Duke of St. Ives. He was the father of my grandfather, one of whose sisters was Henrietta, Lady Middleborough, who died early; another was 'the good Lady Editha,' who was never married; she was noted for her many virtues and holy life. His youngest brother was my dear great-uncle and godfather, Edgar."

"This all tallies with what we already know," said Mr. Askham.

"And, papa," said Lucy, "we have the history of the family of the Miss Llewellyn who married Sir William Thurlestane. So you see,

Uncle Ivor, you are related to the Lady Ann after all."

" So far away we can scarcely call it a relationship, Lucy ; but the history altogether is very interesting."

CHAPTER XXV.

EARLY LIFE.

" My father, the Rev. Edward Oswy Thurlestone, was the second son of Oswy, Earl of Becklea, the fourth earl. My mother was Miss Godwin ; I can but dimly recollect her, except as an invalid, of whom, with a childish feeling, I stood much in awe. I remember the fright it gave me to see her just before her death, when I screamed and ran away, probably from the alteration or pallor of the face. I have often thought of this since, and have seen the same effect upon children when taken to see those who are very ill.

" My father married secondly Miss Beverley, and with her came joy and happiness to my sister and to me. We were no longer kept up in the nursery ; our dear kind stepmother at once took us to her heart, and wished us to be with her, and we both loved her from the first

moment we saw her. We had been, necessarily, much neglected. We could neither of us read well, and writing had not been attempted. My sister was my senior by two years, but was not further advanced in her education than I was ; so our stepmother taught us every day, and although, according to custom with our nurse, we both began with tears and sobs over our spelling, we, under the new tuition, forgot our tears and soon improved. But Letitia, my elder sister, who no doubt inherited our mother's delicacy of health, was never pressed to learn ; and as she grew up, the daily rides on pillion with old John the coachman took the place of study. How much I envied her these reprieves from 'lessons,' and the daily rides ; but I, who was a Thurlestone in vigour of health and love of active enjoyment, could not understand her preferring the jog - trot of the pillion to a gallop on a palfrey, which would be my delight ; and I remember now, with sorrow, how I jeered at her for want of energy, and domineered over her in many ways.

"I was sent to school at York, where I met

many of our young neighbours, and other girls in like position in life. Here I learned music and dancing, a little drawing, and singing. I had the Thurlestane love for music, but I preferred to sing rather than to play on the harpsichord, which was too much trouble for my impatient spirit. How much I have regretted since that I was allowed to have my own way in this, as in many other things. My stepmother played on the harpsichord very well, and ‘she would always play for me,’ I said to myself. ‘Why should I be troubled to practise more than was necessary to learn a song?’ Drawing I much delighted in, and oh, what a resource it has ever been to me! The three years I was at school made me, I know, much more dictatorial than I was before I went there; for I was praised for my quickness in learning, placed, as an example, above my school-fellows, who consequently did not hold me in their favour; and desiring to be foremost, I found myself deserted by them all. If I wished to join in their games, the cry was, ‘Oh no, you are too learned for us, you would quite spoil our

game!' So it ended by my having no companions, and I was heartily glad when the time came for me to leave school.

"Our holidays were only twice in the year, and when at the end of my last term, after nearly five months' absence, I returned home, I was much surprised, and even frightened, to see the alteration in dear Letitia. She was grown so thin, and looked so delicate and transparent, I could not help looking at her. When she was not pale she had a lovely rose tint on her cheeks, her blue eyes were most brilliant, and seemed to be set off by her lustrous brown hair (the latter the only characteristic of a Thurlestone she possessed). I did not stay long with her. We talked about my journey home and other commonplace subjects; she remarked on my healthy appearance, but I could say nothing to her about herself, and as soon as I could I ran into our stepmother's room. I threw myself on her neck; I could no longer restrain myself, and sobbing and crying, I said, 'Oh, mother, dear mother, what has happened to Letitia to make her look so terribly beautiful?'

“‘ My child,’ she replied, ‘ Letitia has not been strong of late.’

“ She was stopped by her tears and her ill-repressed sobs, and we wept together ; I not knowing why I did so, except from a vague feeling of alarm of something I did not understand. She resumed her sentence.

“‘ I told you in my letters that Letitia had not been very well.’

“‘ But, dear mother,’ I interposed, ‘ she must be worse than that, to look so changed as she does. I should not know her if I met her. She was not always so beautiful ; she did not get up to receive me as she used to do, and she looks so tired. Is she ill ? oh, tell me ; is she ill ? ’

“‘ She is exceedingly delicate, and must be carefully tended, and not worried with noise and contradiction, or anything else ; though it is difficult to ruffle her sweet temper, or get her to make a complaint. Now, Ann, I need not after this, I hope, insist on your trying to do all you can to make her happy, and to be quiet and gentle in your behaviour to her.’

“ I was still sobbing and crying, and could not answer ; but every word my stepmother said

seemed to be burned into my brain. I was also full of remorse, remembering, as I most vividly did, the many times I had been the reverse of amiable and gentle to this dear sister. At last I said—

“‘ Truly, dear mother, I will do all you wish ; but tell me, is she very ill ? ’

“‘ She is,’ was her reply, in a most solemn voice, which seemed almost to stun me. I tottered, and she caught me in her arms, and kissing me, led me in silence to my room, where she bade me lie down on the bed and rest, for she was sure I was fatigued with my journey, and, besides, I must want some food.

“ She left the room ; my stunned feeling remained ; I lay with my eyes open looking at the sunlight playing at the open window. My step-mother came back, herself carrying some eatables which she placed on the table. I saw all this without heeding it, and she called me twice before I moved ; then she made me eat and drink, which I did mechanically, whilst she sat by my side without speaking. I was much recovered after this repast. We talked together for a short time ; she then took me out into the

garden to show me some improvements and alterations, and we met my father, who was just returned from his ride. He spoke kindly to me in his usual way, and I was glad he did not notice my swollen eyes, for a word from him would have caused my tears to flow again.

"Our dinner hour was five o'clock, and after strolling a little more about the garden, I went into the house with them, and they told me to make haste down to dinner, so that I could not go to see Letitia again. She did not sit at table with us, but when we went to the drawing-room we found her there busy at her embroidery. We passed a cheerful evening, and when we went to the dining-room for the slight supper always prepared for nine o'clock, Letitia went to her room, taking leave of my father and me. My stepmother soon followed her; then my father said to me—

"Ann, you see how delicate Letitia is. I will not hide from you that we have been somewhat anxious about her; but the physicians have given a better account of her of late, and indeed she seems a little stronger the last few days. Now you are come home to remain, you

must act as a woman. Put yourself entirely under your mother's guidance ; she is the truest and best friend you have ; and you must not presume to act upon your own authority, as I am sorry to say you have often done heretofore. Now remember what I say ; be a good girl and a blessing to us, for we may have much for you to do in a gentle, kind spirit whilst poor Letitia is ill.'

"I was again crying and sobbing, unable to speak. He continued—

"' You must control your feelings too, for tears are not fit for a companion to an invalid. You must be cheerful and gay, but not noisy, remember ; also remember that sadness and dulness in you may have a bad effect on Letitia. Persons when in ill-health are doubly watchful of the countenances and spirits of those about them, for these seem to act as an index by which they can find their own state.'

"My stepmother came back before I could make any answer to my father. He said to her—

"' I have been giving Ann a few instructions as to her future conduct, and I am sure she will

remember, and attend to what I have said.' Then turning to me, for I had risen and stood by his side, he said, 'God bless you, my child; go to bed and try to sleep; awake to-morrow with a smiling face, and the determination to conquer all feelings that will militate against the advice and instructions you have received from your mother and from me.'

"I went to my room full of grief: I knew not why. The whole course of my life seemed changed; yet what had occurred to make it so? Dear Letitia was not well; she had often been ailing; what could make her more so than usual now? She had not had any dangerous illness, or I should have been told of it, and kept out of the way. Why was she to be kept so quiet, and be amused? It was all so strange to me that, weary as I was, I could not sleep. Daylight came, the sun shone, the servant came in to assist me at my toilet. I asked after Letitia; she said she was but poorly; my step-mother had sat up with her nearly all night. I got up feeling only half alive. Breakfast, which was a very early meal at home, was nearly over when I dawdled into the breakfast-room. I

sank down into my chair, after the morning salutations, and then I fell back, asleep, I suppose, from sheer exhaustion.

" Next, I found myself in bed, with my step-mother standing by the side, and the doctor. I was bewildered ; I could not think where I was or what had happened. I imagined I was still at school, and I said, ' Oh, mother, how kind of you to come so far to see me. The girls tease me so ; do take me home with you. I shall be so glad to leave this place. Ask my father to let me go home,' and I caught hold of her.

" ' You are at home, Ann, and shall not go back to school. Calm yourself, and answer Dr. Bolus, whom I have brought in to see you.'

" He decided there was not much the matter with me ; that I must eat a good breakfast, and go out in the garden, ride, go over to Becklea ; do anything, in fact, to amuse and not tire me. He then took his leave, and I was delighted at his prescription. No nasty physic, no lessons ; nothing but pleasure. How charming !

" Some breakfast was brought, and I ate it with much appetite. I dressed myself and went out into the garden, as I was told to do. I was

astonished to find it was late in the day. Had I slept then all that time? I was naturally strong, so I soon regained my spirits, and was able to be cheerful when sitting with Letitia, whom I thought better. It was several days before I rode over to Becklea, a distance of ten miles. There I remained some days with my dear grandparents; so happy, so very happy, not only to be with them, but to know that I was not to go back to school, which had become hateful to me.

“ Months passed in perfect bliss to me; sometimes at Becklea for some days, then at home, where I was a great deal with Letitia. She seemed to me to be much the same; she had, to me, no visible malady. The cold I supposed she had caught had evidently passed away, for I never heard her cough, and all I heard her complain of was that she was ‘so tired;’ so with my girlish thoughtlessness and want of experience I hoped she was soon to be better, if not quite well. But to my infinite dismay one night, I was roused by my stepmother coming into my room, telling me to get up and come in to Letitia.

“ The day was just dawning with all the bright

colours of a lovely sunrise ; her bed, at her request, was wheeled to the open window. She spoke as in a dream of the singing of the birds, but I heard none ; and as the first sunbeam struck into her room, she fell back in my step-mother's arms, who said to my father, who stood near, 'She is gone.'

"Oh, how vividly these scenes pass before me, even at this distance of time.

"I cannot attempt to describe events that naturally followed on such a loss. My father was not a man of many words. It was long before he recovered it ; the deep lines in his face told the anguish of his mind. My dear step-mother and I spoke continually of Letitia—it was a solace to us ; and from my after experience I am convinced that grief which can be shared with another is more bearable, physically and morally, than when it is morbidly pent up in the mind. The feeling of beatitude for the departed which is derived from the recollection and contemplation of the virtues and qualities of those deeply loved, but no longer with us, replaces the bitterness of grief ; and the loved ones are absent, truly, but not lost. No, they live as

vividly in the mind as though still on earth. So with us ; perhaps I ought to say with me, for my stepmother may have felt her actual absence, loss, more deeply than I did, with my girlish elasticity of spirits. It was bliss to talk of her ; but my sorrow was keen when my recollection would turn to my own want of appreciation whilst she lived, and my contradicting temper, my dictatorial ways, to that dear, placid, ever kind sister, who forgave me all my faults without asking ; indeed my pride was too great to allow me to ask that. Oh, the bitter, bitter tears of remorse I have shed for this !

“ My sin against her was my feeling of superior power and activity. I felt that I was physically her superior, and I took advantage of it. When I remembered her so pretty, gentle, dove-like, so feeble and yielding, I supposed these qualities were natural to beautiful people, and part of their character. I was called ‘ plain ; ’ I knew I was strong and active, and ‘ headstrong,’ I was told. My stepmother must have had some trouble in taming my wild spirit ; but she did it judiciously, so that she became my greatest friend and sole support in many a trial in after

life. She was not pretty either ; so that my opinion was confirmed for many a year that strength and activity belonged to a plain face. I found my error in this sweeping clause when I got older.

“ I was at Becklea for some months after my sister’s death ; and when I returned home I found many of the internal arrangements of the house altered ; her room was made into a sitting-room, where my stepmother and I passed the morning. My great-uncle Edgar—he was also my godfather—had given me a new harpsichord, which was placed in this room. A large oriel window took the place of the former one ; the curtains were of chintz, with a pattern of large full-blown roses ; the room had no semblance to what it was before, and one could hardly believe it to be the same. All looked cheerful. A small book-case, with well-selected books prettily bound, and a Tunbridge-ware work-table, gave it a home-like appearance, and I took my place on the couch by the side of my stepmother, who was already seated at her work, and thanked her for all her kind consideration for me.

“ With what pleasure I recollect the happy

days we spent together in that room. On wet days my father would sometimes join us, when his pleasure was to read aloud. He read exceedingly well, and his voice was sweet and musical; so much so, that it happened once or twice that I fell asleep over my drawing or my work whilst listening to him, and was awoke by his laughing. I must, however, confess that, charming as this quiet domestic life was, I should ere long be wishing for something a little more animated; and I have since thought that such was the opinion of my father, for he often suggested that a visit to Becklea would be well for me. I always rejoiced at this. No invitation was necessary for me there, for a room was set apart for me, and never used by any one else, so that I might go there whenever I felt inclined; and as all the gay assemblies were there, or in the neighbourhood, my best wardrobe was kept there, for at home there were only small parties, and our neighbours were quiet folks.

"The nicest parties were at Mr. Dale's, who lived a few miles away. Mrs. Dale was not so many years older than myself to prevent my making a companion of her; but she was much

occupied with a family of young children, the eldest of whom was Charlotte, a very nice clever little girl ; and as she grew up I knew her well, but still the difference in our ages prevented her being as much of a companion to me as her mother was. I wonder what has become of her ; if she be still alive ! I thought I saw her marriage in the York paper some years ago, but I was in too great trouble myself to take much heed about others. My admiration used to be excited by hearing her, whilst still quite a child, repeat a whole scene from Shakespeare without missing a word ; her memory was extraordinary. Her mother said she could always depend upon her accuracy, and she became quite a village chronicler ; I wish I were as good an one. My history might, in hands like hers, be made an interesting biography.”

“ Charlotte fully deserves the praise here given her,” said Mr. Dale. “ I also can remember her excellent recitations. I was one of her pupils. And her good memory has principally given us all, to this point, that we know of the Lady Ann.”

CHAPTER XXVI.

AT BECKLEA.

“WHEN I next went to my grandfather’s my Uncle William was there. Like a true Thurlestone, he was in the army ; so many fell in the wars that they ended with my grandfather’s family. My uncle was a delightful companion to me. We walked and rode out together ; he told me of the many places where he was quartered. His stories of Ireland amused me greatly, and I specially delighted in one story of his having no place but an outhouse to sleep in, on a march ; the rats ran over him and his men and nibbled at them, and when he got up in the morning he found his hair, and especially his pig-tail, eaten by the rats, which were attracted by the powder and pomatum. We were all highly diverted by his humorous manner of telling a story ; my grandfather and grandmother laughed out loud. My grandfather had a keen sense of the ridiculous,

his face beamed with joy ; and at dinner he held on by the arms of his chair to have a good laugh. My grandmother leant back in her high-backed chair, her open fan before her face, and also laughed heartily. Even the staid old butler was seen shaking with suppressed merriment with his back to us, moving about the things on the sideboard, or snuffing the huge candles, under pretence of occupation, till he could command his countenance.

“ I always sat next my uncle at dinner, and Earnshaw, the old butler, used to make his remarks in a low voice to my uncle as he waited on him. He would say, ‘ Oh, Master Willum, come and tell us they stories in the housekeeper’s room. I’m like to bust, and canna laugh enough here.’ Or it would be, ‘ Oh, Master Willum, leave your funning for a bit ; I’m nigh dead beat.’ At another time it would be, if the guests were silent, ‘ Give us a story, Master Willum, we’re raither dull.’ After the story had had its cheering effect, he would say as he passed, ‘ It’s been like a goblet of wine to ’em all, Master Willum ; another, please, sir.’ Then,

'Gie 'em the story of the rots, sir.' This request came very often ; and if the story were told he would say, 'Well done, Master Willum ; that's capitable ; it's foine.'

"One day Earnshaw met my uncle in the hall, and said to him, 'Oh, Master Willum, don't tell too many of your fine stories at the dinner-table. I don't know what my Lord will say to me a' laughing so ; but I canna help it, I can't indeed, if you're on with them tales.'

"'Never mind, Earnshaw,' my uncle replied, 'it amuses my father and mother. They will not object to see a smile on your face ; you can fettle about the spoons on the sideboard, as you are wont to do ; I must tell my stories to amuse them. It is not often I am here.'

"'No, sir, and the more's the pity ; for you do put a little life in us ; you always was such good company. Why my Lord could trust you before all the rest, to amuse the company when you was but a little child. Master Henry was bold enough to be sure, and not afraid of no one, but he hadn't your fun.'

“ ‘ My fun ! it will soon be over, Earnshaw,’ he said, mournfully.

“ ‘ Lors, sir, don’t take on so ; why what are ye going to be after ? ’

“ ‘ After ! nothing, Earnshaw ; but I am ordered to the West Indies—to Jamaica, I hope, but it may be to one of the other islands. But you must keep this a secret.’

“ ‘ Yes, sir, I will. But Jimmaky ! why lors me, sir, that’s the place for rum. I hope you’ll send us some good stuff.’

“ ‘ Ah, yes, Earnshaw. Mountains of sugar, and rivers of rum, eh ! I will think of you, don’t fear. You would like, perhaps, a little black boy into the bargain ? ’

“ ‘ Ay, sir, like my Lady the Duchess of Trent’s dwarf,’ said the butler, laughing heartily. ‘ Lors, what a objick he wor.’

“ My uncle’s leave drew to an end. He went off, as he said he should, in the greatest glee (apparently), leaving his beloved father and mother in fits of laughter in the arch, waving their adieux as he drove away. No one was more grieved than I at his departure. I went to my room and wept. I never had had so charm-

ing a companion before ; he was quite my play-fellow, although nearly double my age. I felt lost and lonely without him ; but fresh arrivals were continual ; the house was never empty, and every fresh guest was greeted as if there had never been one before. One had no time for regrets when occupied with greetings to the newcomers.

“ The house was full ; a grand ball was to take place in the neighbourhood ; we were all to be present. I of course went in my grandfather’s coach. My uncle, Lord Thurlestane, and his wife took some of the guests in their coach, and the rest followed.

“ At the ball I was introduced by the lady of the house, Lady Coryton, to a gentleman whose name I could not catch, but who greatly took my fancy, and I danced the minuet with him. He was most graceful and elegant. After the dance he led me back to my grandmother, who was pleased to make his acquaintance, and they conversed together some time ; but I had scarcely a word with him, which disappointed me much.

“ I danced with several other gentlemen, and I was glad when my first partner came to take me

in to supper. I could not catch his name, but he knew mine ; for he said how much pleasure he had gained by the acquaintance of, he supposed, a relation of mine, Major Thurlestane, in Wales, where he was quartered. I knew this to be my dear Uncle William, and we conversed about him, to my great delight ; he too spoke of him as a most charming companion, and regretted that he was ordered off to the West Indies.

“ This was the first I had heard of my uncle’s destination, and I could not see why it should be so much regretted ; however, I asked no questions. On our way home I mentioned this. My grandfather did not know it, nor did my grandmother ; but they also remarked they would be glad had it been anywhere else, for it was not a healthy climate to all people. I was very curious to know the name of my cavalier, and I ventured to ask, feeling that I blushed very much as I said the words, and I was thankful that the coach was too dark for any one to have seen me.

“ My grandmother said his name was Llewellyn, a very common name in Wales ; that she did not know of what family he was, but that evidently he was a very fine gentleman ; from which

expression I knew that he had her entire approval. I must be wanting in the capacity for recalling faces, for although I was much struck by this Mr. Llewellyn's appearance and figure altogether, as well as his agreeable manner and voice, I have never been able to recall exactly his face or features, beyond the general expression ; but I should know him again if I saw him. And I never met him again ! I think he must have been about my own age.

“ After this, Mr. and Mrs. Dale came over to spend a few days at Becklea. I was so glad when they came ; they were intimate with my grandfather and grandmother, but I never was but that once at Becklea when they were there. Mr. Dale’s father had been intimate with my great-grandfather, Earl Charles, and his wife, ‘ the Lady Gwendoline, Countess of Becklea,’ as, being a Duke’s daughter, she was called. Many were the anecdotes recalled by my grandparents ; and Mr. Dale added some told by his father about Earl Charles and his wife, to whom he remained a devoted lover to the end of his life, surviving her only by a couple of months.

“ The Chaplain also had a share in the anec-

dotes ; but though some about him were laughable enough, none were to his credit, and he must have been a disreputable character. My grandfather declared it was his firm belief that his father was terrified by his Chaplain, and dared not shut his door against him as he ought to have done. ‘He never came within my doors,’ said my grandfather ; ‘all my people had orders not to admit him on the premises.’ Although all these tales were told of him, my grandfather made a special request that his *name* might not be mentioned again, for he could not bear to hear it.

“ I never was but once in any way unhappy at Becklea, and that was during the visit of my Uncle George, Lord Thurlestane, and his wife—Maria was her name. I never met a more disagreeable woman. She tried to make mischief wherever she could, and to set one person against another. My Uncle Henry was the only person she seemed to care for, and she humoured him in his faults. My grandmother was as much annoyed with her as others were, for she was quite as rude to her as to every one else, and I was glad when she left.

“ One source of much disquiet to me at this time was a proposition of my marriage with Lord Middleborough, a man some years my senior, who came to stay at Becklea. He might almost be considered as a connection of the family ; for his father’s first wife was my grandfather’s sister, Lady Henrietta ; she, however, died within the two first years of her marriage, leaving no children.

“ The present Lord Middleborough was the son of the third wife, so that there was in reality no connection at all, but ties of affection had always been kept up with the husband of Lady Henrietta. As a worldly arrangement, there was nothing wanting to make this a most excellent match for me ; but I could not endure the sight of him ; his officious politeness and formal manners were most obnoxious to me, his perfumes and dandyism, his black hair and eyes (I never could look at black eyes without feeling irritated by their glistening harshness), his sallow complexion, and claw-like hands ! His voice too was to my ears croaking as a raven’s. Was there ever such an odious coxcomb !

“ I said all this to my grandmother when she

urged his suit. He brought me one day, when I was sitting alone in the saloon, a magnificent ring of rubies and diamonds, a large ring for the forefinger, one that any one else might be proud to receive; but I was so indignant at what I mentally considered his presumption, that I immediately tossed it out of my work-box, in which he had placed it, and it only missed by a short distance falling into the fire. He picked it up and put it in his waistcoat pocket, saying he was sorry something had flurried me, but he hoped at another time I should be more disposed to accept it.

"‘Never,’ said I; and hurriedly left the room.

“I had a good cry after this, and went to tell my troubles to my grandmother, assuring her that at no time, near or distant, would I have anything to say to a man I had so great an aversion to. She tried at first to argue with me as to the excellence of the match, its advantages in every way. I agreed with her on these points, if only the man could be changed. I am sure in her heart she felt for me. I wanted her to dismiss him, but he would take no refusal from any but

my own lips, and I had to go through the ordeal.

“ Afterwards I went to my room and wept, pitying myself for my hard fate. How different it would have been for me, thought I, if my lover had been Mr. Llewellyn ! And I felt the blush rush to my face as the name came into my mind—that name I dare scarcely allow myself to think of ! I compared his modest grace with my Lord’s superciliousness ; his appearance with my Lord’s swarthy face. I had no idea what Mr. Llewellyn’s position or prospects in life were ; but, making him my hero, I declared to myself that, even if he were penniless, it would be all happiness with him ; but misery, utter misery, with the other, notwithstanding all his titles, riches, and possessions. I remained in my grandmother’s sitting-room all that day ; and the next day I found Lord Middleborough was gone. I never saw him again, and do not regret it.

“ I began to fear Mr. Llewellyn had taken too much hold on my mind. He was ever before me ; his voice, oh, what a sweet voice ! ever in my ears. That minuet and the conversation at

the supper-table were acted over and over again in my imagination. I wished I had some one I could trust with my confidence ; it would have been so agreeable to talk of this—but I could not mention it to either my stepmother or my grandmother ; I knew they would say it was unmaidenly, and perhaps they would be angry.

“ However that might be, there was no getting rid of the impression entirely, though sometimes it was long in abeyance. Still, even now, though so many years have passed, I remember that evening with delight, and have never seen an equal to its hero, who no doubt soon forgot me, his partner for one dance ! and would now, if he lives, be astonished if told he had ever even met me, a plain little body—I know I always was.

“ After this episode of frustrated marriage, I begged my grandmother not to think of it for me again—I was much too happy as I was to wish to change ; and, dear soul, she complied with my request, so that I felt free to enjoy myself on all occasions.

“ Lady Thurlestane died somewhat suddenly. I cannot say we regretted her, but her death

occasioned a journey to York for my grandmother, who took me with her. We spent a week at that famous inn ‘The King’s Head,’ where great state was kept up in all the arrangements ; and to see the landlord bring in himself the first dish and set it upon the dinner-table was a sight to be remembered. He, a tall, portly man, seemed bursting with the weight of importance that rested upon him in the fulfilment of this solemn duty !

“ We travelled in the great coach, with the four fat Flemish horses and two outriders, and every day the coach with four horses and two footmen came round to take us shopping for our mourning, and driving about. The ponderous coach and horses had some difficulty occasionally in getting along, and in turning in the streets of York, many being narrow, but my grandmother sat quietly, and was never flurried. I was so sorry this death prevented our mixing in some gay Assemblies going on at this time ; for I had no sorrow or sympathy for the one for whom we were to wear black. Mourning was a serious business at Becklea ; for a month no one but my father came there ; when that time had

expired visitors came as usual, but we went to no balls or routs for some time."

"She had not forgotten you, dear Uncle Ivor. I am so glad," said Lucy. But the Colonel made no answer, he seemed absorbed in reflection.

"It is very interesting," said Mrs. Askham.

CHAPTER XXVII.

AT COURT.

“ My grandparents took me to London to be presented at Court. This was a great source of pleasure to me. Loyalty having been impressed upon me from my earliest infancy, I felt that to be presented to and saluted on the cheek by the King was a great honour. To see the King and Queen, of whom I had heard so frequently ; to be at the Court balls and concerts ; to be kindly spoken to by their Majesties and the Princesses, was delightful ; and the King, with that promptness of recollection which is one of the most graceful attributes of Royalty, remembering the traditions of the loyalty of the Thurlestanes, inquired of my grandfather—

“ ‘ How many of your sons, my Lord, have I now in my army ? ’

“ ‘ But one, your Majesty,’ he replied ; ‘ we are dwindled down to very few.’

“ ‘ Sorry for it, my Lord, sorry for it. Brave men, loyal subjects,’ said the King.

“ Ah ! if it had been known it might have been said, ‘ NOT ONE, your Majesty ;’ for yellow fever had carried off my dear Uncle William before this time of our being at Court, but we did not hear of it for two months afterwards.

“ We went to all kinds of entertainments in London, and I was introduced to people without number. ‘ The Lady Ann,’ as I was called, was much sought after, and compliments innumerable were paid me, especially on my dancing ; but in the dance I had not one partner equal to ‘ my Welsh partner,’ as I called him. My one solitary minuet with him was worth all the rest. How curious that I should never see him again !

“ With the theatres I was especially entertained ; we often went to them. But the Sunday card parties were very dull to me, though my grandmother and the elders of society liked them much.

“ At one of these parties I met a cousin of my mother’s, Mr. Godwin, who was painfully like dear Letitia, and my grandmother said he was the image of my mother. He was invited down to Becklea ; but being a barrister in London, he

could not leave, and York was not on his circuit. I much regretted this. He was a rising barrister, and subsequently held a high position at the bar. He brought his wife to see us, a very handsome woman, with good manners. They afterwards came to dine with us.

“ We also met a distant relation of my grandmother’s, Mr. Owaine Gwent (Gwent was her maiden name), a man of good property in Cornwall. My dear grandmother, whose matrimonial projects for me only slumbered, again began. She said how pleasing it would be to her for me to wed into the Gwent family, this time, as they were her own people. I could not make such violent objections against this proposition as I did before, when the question of my marriage was urged, when speaking to her of her own relative. But fortunately for me we went back to Yorkshire before any arrangement could be matured, and subsequent sorrows prevented its renewal. I could not have married him.

“ Our last gaiety, at my special request, was to visit the theatre where we saw Garrick, our favourite actor. On coming out, so great was

the press of people and coaches and sedan-chairs, that we had to wait a very long time in the hall of the theatre before we could get away. It poured with rain, and a violent thunder-storm came on. People hurried here and there; the chairs and porters occupied much space; the link-boys could not keep their flambeaux alight for the rain; lanterns were shouted for; and at last, after standing shivering for a long time, we were hurried through the drenching rain to the coach. I feared much for my grandmother. My grandfather and one of the footmen took her, one by each arm, to prevent her falling in the muddy street, and I followed as best I could, with the other footman supporting me along the slippery way, I neither looking to the right or to the left, till I got into the coach. Our dresses were completely spoiled. And so ended our last day in London.

“It took us three weeks to get home, paying visits on the road, and going the whole way with our own four horses and outriders, as we had come up from Yorkshire. We had none of the adventures on the road which people were always prepared to meet with.

“ ‘ Suppose we should meet a second ‘ Galloping Jasper,’ ’ said my grandmother, referring to my great-grandfather’s adventures with a highwayman, so called ; and my great-grandmother’s predilection for the said highwayman, whom she declared ‘ was withal a very proper gentleman.’ I begged my grandmother to tell me about this, to which she assented. Parts of the narrative related to the badness of the ‘ ways ’—they could not be called ‘ roads ; ’ in fact, they were merely tracks when they came to heaths or commons, or grassy plains.

“ It was a journey of some weeks from Yorkshire to Cornwall, stopping, as they did, to pay visits by the way. Once they went from London, but did not find it benefited them much, for they had so many more friends’ houses to make a halt at on their way down by the west ; whereas Salisbury Plain was a vast desert to be traversed, and it was in crossing it that some of their adventures happened. The travelling party was large, and I should say, from the tales, not a very valorous one. Robbers, like spectres, seemed to haunt the fancies of all the travellers at every turn.

“Imagine such a calvacade as this : my Lord and Lady in a large coach drawn by six horses, with two postillions, the coachman driving the wheelers from the box—literally a good-sized ‘box,’ containing hammers, jacks, nails, ropes, and all the requisites for mending the wheels or coach in case of a break-down—no uncommon occurrence ; and this box was covered with a cloth, ‘the hammer cloth,’ which hid the box with the hammers and tools.

“By the side of the coach rode two outriders. In front of the horses rode a guide, changed each day according to the route. After the great coach and six came another but inferior coach, with four horses and one postilion, the coachman also driving from his large ‘box’ full of tools. This coach contained the children and nurses, and my Lady’s tirewoman ; two footmen sat on the board behind. This coach was followed by a large covered cart drawn by two horses; it contained the luggage, some bedding for my Lord and Lady in case of need, their pillion saddle, spare wheels, and other things, and bundles of faggots tied on behind, to fill, when required, the ruts in the road, to make them passable.

“ This was many years before General Wade set the example of making good roads. I must not forget the four running footmen who, two at a time, took turns in running by the side of the coach of my Lord and Lady ; the other two either sat on the footboard or stood up, notably, when coming to a village or town, holding on to the coach by straps. So unkept were the roads, that even with all these accessories, the outriders, when they came to a morass or very deep ruts, had to ride on to get succour from farms or gentlemen’s residences near.

“ All were well armed ; the outriders and postillions had horse-pistols in holsters. My Lord had pistols and swords in the sword-case of his coach ; the head coachman had a blunderbuss, which he greatly relied on ; and there were firearms and cudgels for the use of the other men. However, tradition says that this formidable array of arms was seldom if ever required ; but the travellers had many frights, and, as I said before, visions and apprehensions of highwaymen ever haunted them.”

Mr. Dale here stopped, and the papers were put aside till the next evening.

Mr. Askham asked Colonel Llewellyn if the incident of the storm, coming out of the theatre, was not the same as the one he had related.

"Yes," he answered, "and well I remember it. I can fancy at this moment that I am there. It was a very rough night, and she says truly that she neither looked to the right nor to the left; for I was close beside her, and she did not know it. The remarks she makes about me are too flattering, for I cannot but understand whom she means."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

“ GALLOPING JASPER.”

“ As we journeyed along I begged my grandmother to tell some of these stories of the road, and she kindly agreed to my wish, saying—

“ These adventures the Lady Gwendoline was very fond of relating. But,’ said my grandmother, ‘in order that you shall enter entirely into the spirit of them, I must begin by telling you something of her own history. She was the Lady Gwendoline Tresillian, only daughter and heiress of the last Duke of St. Ives ; and was always styled, from her high rank, the Lady Gwendoline, Countess of Becklea. Her mother, the Duchess of St. Ives, was one of the Pendarves family, and was left a widow with this young heiress, who was but five years old when her father died. Of the estates, Pendlebury Castle was the residence ; the other estate, called Gogmagog Towers, was but a ruin on a large tract of farm lands.

“ ‘They continued to live at the castle till the duchess died, and the child was twelve years of age. Then her guardian, old Lord Winterblossom, took her to London to reside in his house ; and when her education was finshed she was presented at Court by his wife, went to all the routs and fashionable amusements as a matter of course, and met her future husband, to whom she was married when she was of age, and was carried by him to Yorkshire, where she reigned supreme.

“ ‘She wished to revisit Pendlebury, but found, when she had been in Cornwall a few months, that she liked Yorkshire much better. They made but three visits there, at long intervals, and then the Cornwall estates were let ’ (and so they continued to be till they were sold by the last Earl’s creditors, I must add).

“ ‘ On their first journey to Cornwall they went from London. Their first halt had been at a friend’s house near Brentford, who sent them on with a guide to cross Hounslow Heath. Here they had their first fright. They had not gone far on the heath before they came to a gallows ; and at the foot of the gallows, whereon hung two

bodies in chains, up sprung a creature, howling and making a terrible noise, and came towards the travelling party on all fours.

“‘ Screams and shrieks came from the women; the Countess clung to her husband, who, however, managed to disengage himself, and just in time to save the unfortunate creature from being killed by his attendants, who were advancing towards him with cudgels. The creature, who looked more like a baboon than a human being, was in fact a poor maniac, who passed his life wandering about, but chose the gallows with its ghastly occupants as his chief abode; and he had scraped a gutter round the base a few feet distant, which displayed more reason than could be expected of him, as it gave him a well-drained platform on which to lie. His dark matted hair hung down his shoulders; his beard was strong and stubby; his large teeth looked dazzlingly white as he grinned; and with his protruding jaws and staring black eyes made him look most ferocious.

“‘ The maids never ceased screaming, but the Countess, after the first shock, looked on with curiosity. The idiot crawled or ran on all fours

with remarkable speed ; and it was his sudden rush towards the horses that made the leaders swerve, and stopped the further progress of the coach, which at no time went much beyond a jog-trot, and creaked and groaned in its turn at every hole or rut.

“ ‘ It was with some difficulty that the idiot could be got out of the way. He clung to the rope-traces, to the wheels, to the coach, to anything within reach seemingly, rather than be left behind ; and the Earl was obliged to get out of the coach and entice him away. Then he put him in charge of one of the outriders till the vehicles were too far gone to allow of his following them. To amuse him, he gave him a coin or two, but after turning them over and over on the ground, he gave a horrible yell and threw them away.

“ ‘ Some food was then given him, but after a few mouthsful, which he ate growling over it like an animal, he threw that away also ; the coaches and their occupants being his attraction. The Countess begged he might not be strapped to the gibbet, as suggested by the guide, who said that the next passer-by would probably release

him ; but it was found necessary to do so till all the coaches had passed, when the outrider was to release him and gallop off after them. His howls and screams were fearful, but there was nothing else to be done.

“‘ At last he was left behind, and the man rode up to the coach. He said the maniac with superhuman strength had broken the cords, but was so exhausted that he lay there more like one dead than alive, and so he was left. It was reported to them at the next resting-place that this idiot at times attacked people in a ferocious manner, especially women, and that he was most dangerous ; but that the superstition of the common people about interfering with those who are demented was so strong, that it was considered best to leave him at his chosen place. All passers-by, if they could, gave him food and drink, and raiment was provided for him.’

“‘ And what became of him ? ’ I asked.

“‘ It was said that he was found frozen to death one very severe winter ; for he could not be induced to leave the foot of the gallows, and he succumbed to the rigour of the season. He

was buried there, and the tale is that his wraith still haunts the precincts.

“ ‘ When the travellers got to Salisbury Plain the coach broke down ; one wheel was crushed in the deep hole of a rut that was filled with water, the pole was broken, and the coach was tilted on one side. To all appearance they were alone, and the guide said, some few miles from a town or habitation.

“ ‘ They were preparing to send the leaders of the coach, ridden by the postilions, in search of help, when all of a sudden a horseman rode up to them and asked if he could be of any assistance. His manner and address were those of a perfect gentleman ; his dress was that of a Cavalier on his travels—a laced hat with feather trimming, a Spanish cloak covering a laced coat, and huge jack-boots. He got off his horse, and going to the door of the coach, hat in hand, knelt on one knee, begging the Countess to make him her footstool, placing his arm as her support. With some difficulty and the aid of the Earl she thus alighted, and in a most stately manner, with a grand curtsey, tendered her thanks to him for his assistance.

“ ‘ He made himself acquainted with the state of the injuries, and giving a shrill whistle, a troop of six horsemen came galloping up, rising as it were from out of the earth, the inequalities of the ground facilitating their concealment. These men, with the help of the Earl’s people, soon patched up the coach for another start, and they were again on their way when assistants from the next village met them. The Cavalier and his men accompanied them a short distance, and after a graceful obeisance from the Chief, all galloped off in another direction, and were soon lost to sight.

“ ‘ It was the close of the day before they reached the friend’s house to which they were bound. In relating their adventures they were told it could have been no other than “ Galloping Jasper ” who came to their assistance. He was the terror of the neighbourhood, and one of the most desperate of highwaymen. The Earl and the Countess, however, were earnest in their praises both of the Chief and his men. He was such a perfect gentleman ; he spoke in the softest tones ; his men were both clever and respectful, they said.

“““It must have been the reflection of your own stately manners, my Lady, which was cast upon him,” said their host, “and he, under the influence, could only follow it; for though, like most of his class, he can be capable of great and good deeds to those in need and distress, he is more prone to the contrary, it is said, though I speak not from my own experience, for I never met him.”

The Countess was much gratified by this compliment to herself, and was still more eloquent in her praises of “Galloping Jasper.” She wanted to know who he really was, for in her mind so perfect a gentleman could only be so when born and bred one.

““A week was passed at this house. Nothing more was heard of the fascinating highwayman. The Countess, however, was full of curiosity about him, yet afraid to ask too many questions. The coach had been thoroughly repaired, and they resumed their journey.

““The road, or rather track, after a few miles got worse and worse, till at last it was decided that the pillion saddle should be put upon one of the saddle-horses, and my Lord and Lady, with a guide and the two outriders, should proceed on

their way ; the rest to follow as best they could. The Countess rode behind her husband, and they were approaching the end of their day's journey, when, galloping to meet them from quite the opposite direction, came a gay Cavalier in a blue coat laced with gold, and a feathered three-cornered cocked hat, well down over his eyes. He pulled up suddenly as he came to them, got off his horse, and with a graceful bow handed to the Countess a diamond locket he said she had dropped on Salisbury Plain the day he had last the honour of meeting her. Then remounting his horse, and with another graceful bow, he galloped off again, without waiting for their acknowledgments, and they continued their route in the jog-trot sort of amble which is taught to horses for this particular service, and is the pace best suited to ladies riding pillion. How comfortable the farmers' wives look as they jog along behind their husbands or sons.' The Countess paused.

“‘I hope that is not all,’ I said to my grandmother.

“‘Well, then, to continue my story. Once again the Countess suddenly encountered “Gal-

loping Jasper." This was at a roadside inn, on another journey to Cornwall. This time it was when they were coming down from the west of England, and in order to avoid the swamps of Dartmoor, went round by Oakhampton and Lydford to Tavistock, and thence on to Launceston.

"The Countess preferred to sit in the orchard, on a garden-seat brought there for her, to remaining in the little close parlour of the inn, whilst the horses were baiting, and was left alone with her refreshment of milk and fruit. She heard a脚步, and looking round, beheld a Cavalier, tall and elegantly dressed, advancing towards her. He made her a most profound bow, and asked permission to address her.

"She rose and made one of her stately curtseys, begging him to approach, adding that her Lord would soon return. He told her he was informed that they intended to pass through Lydford on their way west. Was she aware of the dangers of that part of the country? She answered, quite amazed at the stranger's knowledge of their intentions, that she was much beholden to him for his solicitude on their account; that they had

heard of some rough people who dwelt not far from those parts, or near unto Brent Tor ; but they hoped to avoid them, and considered their large party and the arms they carried sufficient to awe or overcome any ill-conditioned people that they might meet. Nevertheless, she was much beholden to him, and so would be her Lord, for his courteousness in giving them warning.

“‘‘ He said, with much deference to her Ladyship, he would still warn her against these people, called “Gubbings,” and the place they inhabit, which was called “Gubbings’ Land.”

“‘‘ And pray, sir,” interrupted the Countess, “what is the meaning of ‘gubbings’ ? ”

“‘‘ Gubbings, madam,” he replied, “is a word used by fishermen, and signifies the offal of fish ; and it is said these shameless and lawless people earned the name by their disgraceful conduct.”

“‘‘ I do not see the inference, sir,” said the Countess, haughtily.

“‘‘ Yet, madam, whatever may be the origin of their name, they are known and know themselves by it. I doubt if your Ladyship’s attendants will be able to restrain these wild people,

should you come in their way ; but, with the permission of yourself and my Lord, I will escort you, when they will not venture to appear."

" " " I thank you much, sir," she replied, " and my Lord will do so likewise, but indeed we fear not these people, and need not trouble you to escort us." With this she made him another stately curtsey ; he made her an equally stately and profound bow, and retired to the back of the little inn.

" " When her husband returned to her, she related what had occurred. He greatly praised her discrimination, and also declared there was nothing to fear, and the utter impossibility, even if there were, of their being escorted by a stranger, or a highwayman (for such this Cavalier might be), with the sole intention of robbing them, notwithstanding his gentle manner and appearance. Besides, he believed these people were only gipsies, and perfectly harmless.

" " They set off again on their journey, and passed through Lydford, with its castle falling in ruins, its old church, and the bridge over the deep chasm of the river ; then along the sweet scenery

of woods and tors of singular character, till they reached the lovely district of Brent Tor. Notwithstanding the protestations of my Lady and her husband, their valour was a little on the wane at this juncture, especially as it was getting late in the day, and fewer travellers would be met on the road. The guide too kept nearer to them, and looked back often towards them.

“ ‘ All at once some men came rushing towards them and stopped the horses. Two came up to the coach door, saying, “ Stand and deliver ; ” but the Earl with his sword struck one man on the arm a great gash, the footmen and riders were in a medley with the attacking party, and mischief would have followed but for the opportune approach of the Cavalier and his troop, at the sight of whom the attackers fled with all haste. Some of the troopers rode after them, and the Cavalier with others rode up to the coach. He came forward, hat in hand, saying, “ I trust, Madam and you, my Lord, are neither frightened nor hurt.”

“ “ “ Would you, sir,” said the Countess, her voice all in a tremble, “ kindly send one of my men to open the door of the coach, for though I

am not hurt nor much frightened, there is blood in the coach, and I fear for my Lord, who has encountered these furious men."

"The Cavalier got off his horse and assisted the Countess to alight from the coach, when it was found that the blood came from the Earl's wrist, which had been cut with the knife of the "gipsy" (as they called him). One of the troopers soon bound up the wound, which was of no consequence, but had bled freely. The Earl thanked him, and said it was done so well, he should say the man was accustomed to the work. The man made no answer, but, bowing, left the carriage. It was characteristic of the Cavalier's troopers that they never spoke.

"My Lady said to the Cavalier, she begged to know to whom they had again owed their deliverance.

"Madam," he replied, "I am Galloping Jasper, whom you have already met on Salisbury Plain. All travelling parties are known to me, and my pleasure is to succour those whom I esteem; therefore, whenever I hear of your coming south of Bristol, I shall take care to prevent any attack upon your party. My Lord and my Lady, I take

my leave of you.” As on previous occasions of their meeting him, he did not wait for acknowledgments, but, quick as an arrow from the bow, he vaulted into his saddle, bowing his adieux as he galloped away.

“ ‘ This “ Galloping Jasper ” was remarkable for the exquisite form and whiteness of his hands. He complained that they betrayed him more than anything else. He could stain them, it is true, but nothing could conceal the elegance of their shape. His face was not handsome, but the expression of his eyes and mouth was full of benevolence, and the square cut of the chin gave him that look of decision and firmness which, with his usually thoughtful look, gave him his position of leader of any body of men he was amongst. He was tall and strongly built, with rather high shoulders, and he stood very erect. It is difficult to say how he got the cognomen of “ Galloping JASPER,” for that was not his name.’

“ I have not written all this from memory. I had it written down from my grandmother’s mouth ; she wished me to get into the habit of writing correctly.

“The Lady Gwendoline used to speak of these adventures with some delight, and declared that so long as she could have the ‘Cavalier,’ as she always called him, to be her escort or guard, she would not fear to travel any road. She was not free from human weaknesses ; and it was said of her that she bridled herself up, and was not a little vain of the distinction that had been shown her by him.

“My grandfather said he remembered quite well the coaches being attacked by the Gubbings’ people at Brent Tor. He saw the wild-looking men with their shaggy black hair coming to the door of the coach in which he (then a child) and the women were ; and remembered the screams of the maids, and the threats of the nurse if he dared to look out of window, in which case she declared he would be carried off by the savages, and they would all be murdered.

“‘That was when I was going to see you, my Lady,’ he said to my grandmother.

“‘Well, they were merry days, my Lord ; we had fine games at hide and seek,’ my grandmother replied.

“‘But I was jealous even then, my love ; I took

it you fancied your cousin Arthur Trevellyan better.’

“‘Ah, I would not change,’ said my grandmother. ‘But I believe you were jealous even of Dash, my spaniel.’

“The dear old people often lived their childish days over again; theirs had been a happy married life, and they were still like lovers.

“I asked my grandfather if it was ever found out who ‘Galloping Jasper’ was. He told me, in answer, that it was proved after his death that he was the son of a gentleman of old family and good estate; but so fond was he of adventure, riding, and rollicking ways, that he turned highwayman for the mere frolic. He could so disguise himself that he even stopped his own father and mother, took all they had, and conversed long with them without their discovering him; and they found all he had taken from them on the sitting-room table when they got home, the servants not knowing who put them there. He often had interviews, by stealth, with his mother and his unmarried sister; and once, in disguise, with his father at an inn, who made him so angry, by the unjust words he used,

speaking of himself, supposing he was speaking to a stranger, that he was very near discovering himself by his voice in equally angry tones. The women are said to have idolized him, as they are apt to do a desperate and at the same time a generous character."

"Her memory is equal to Charlotte's, to remember all these details, even though some part had originally been written down by her," Mr. Dale observed at this point in the narrative.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A CORNISH MERRY-MAKING.

"My grandmother was very fond of her Cornish people. It was quite amusing to hear the dear old lady, when she once got on the topic of Cornish traditions : her face would brighten up, and both she and my grandfather became quite animated over the old stories ; for he also had Cornish blood, his mother being the daughter of the Duke of St. Ives, as I before said.

"Caroline Gwent and Oswy Thurlestane had been playmates, when his father and mother went to Pendlebury ; the Gwents being their nearest neighbours. The friendship had continued, and ended by their marriage, a happy union of true and lasting love. It was in the merry days of their courtship that they, with various friends, went to Helstone for the 'Maying.' Of an evening, when we were alone, they would talk over the days of their youth ; and

my grandmother would sit down to the harpsichord to play and sing ; her voice, though very much gone, was still harmonious. She would sing the ‘ Halan tō,’ the Cornish May-song, her special favourite, and Welsh songs, and play dances and jigs peculiar to Cornwall. I begged her one day to tell me about the ‘ Halan tō’ to which they so often referred.

“ ‘ Oh, it was a great romp,’ said my grandfather.

“ ‘ Some persons besides the herds and lasses made it so ; fie on them,’ said my grandmother. ‘ But *we* never did,’ she added, bridling up.

“ ‘ No, my love ; we were models of propriety and decorum. Still we were forced to acknowledge it a romp, and were glad to escape from it.’

“ ‘ Ann wishes to know the history of the “ HALAN TÔ.” Will you tell it to her ? ’ said my grandmother.

“ ‘ No, my love ; you know more about it than I do. I thought most of you in my short visits to Cornwall, and took little heed of the country folks.’

“My grandmother then told me the following, which, with her aid, I afterwards wrote down.

“It is customary on the 8th of May for the country people to go out into the fields and woods at break of day, and gather all kinds of flowers—hawthorn and sycamore boughs, and whatever else they can find—to ornament themselves and their hats with garlands. Should they on their way find any one at work, they make him ride on a pole carried on their shoulders to the stream, over which in a wide place he is [to leap, or pay a forfeit of money. After this rustic sport, they return to the town or village, bringing their flowery garlands or “summer” home. Then they form themselves into various dancing groups with the lasses, and they jig it hand in hand all over the town, claiming a right of dancing through any person’s house, in at one door, out at the other, and so through the garden; thus they continue the “Ffodi,” or prosperous song, and dance until it is dark.

“In the afternoon the gentry of the place, especially about Helstone, take their May ex-

cursions in parties. Some go to the farm-houses in the neighbourhood to drink syllabubs, cider, or tea, which they take with them; afterwards they return to the town in a morris dance, both the ladies and gentlemen, elegantly dressed in their summer attire, adorned with nosegays, and accompanied by minstrels, playing for the dancers the traditional May tune; so they whisk it along all through the streets. After a few dances each gentleman leads his partner into the assembly-room, where there is always a ball that evening.

“The lower classes of people pass their evening in similar merriment at the public-houses, and other places; and the fun is kept up until midnight, with the greatest hilarity and decorum. Most of the common people, who speak the Cornish language, call the ceremony “FFYNNU” and “FFODI,” which implies prosperity and happiness. Others call it “Floraday.” This custom is of the highest antiquity, and the people declare it has descended to them from the Druids. “HALAN TÔ” is translated thus: “HALAN” is the calends or first day of

May (or any other month); “tô” is a large bunch of flowers, which is carried on a pole on men’s shoulders.’

“I can remember two of the verses of this Cornish song; they are—

‘Robin Hood and Little John,
They both are gone to fair—O.
And we will to the merry greenwood,
To see what they do there—O.
And for the chase—O, the buck and doe,
To chase the buck and doe.

Chorus—With HALAN TÔ, sing merry O.

We were up as soon as day—O,
For to fetch the summer home;
The summer and the May—O,
For summer is a-come—O,
And winter is a-gone—O.
And summer is a-come O, and winter is a-gone O.

Chorus—With HALAN TÔ, sing merry O.’

“‘It is curious that Robin Hood and Little John should have found their way into Cornwall,’ I said.

“‘They were such popular heroes,’ answered my grandfather, ‘that they were claimed as boon companions wherever there was rollicking and riot.’

“ ‘ Oh, do not call it by those names,’ said my grandmother ; ‘ for they imply that we should not have been present.’

“ ‘ It must have amounted to that in former days, my love ; and even the presence of yourself and other ladies scarcely prevented its becoming so at the time we speak of.’

“ Then they would continue chatting together of old days, of Cornish songs, dances and jigs, and their close connection with those of Wales ; of the Cornish poets in early days, of whom merry Michael was considered of greatest renown ; of the Cornish wrestlers and hurlers ; of King Arthur, their countryman, who granted to the Cornish people the privilege and honour of leading the front of the battle. My grandmother, who had lived in Cornwall up to the time she was married, had been able to speak the Cornish language, and lamented she had forgotten it, for if she went there again she should feel like a stranger.

“ ‘ Never fear, my love,’ said my grandfather. ‘ Although General Wade has been the promoter of good roads, our journeys in future will not be

so distant. We will live over again the scenes of our youth in this room.''"

"Dear old people," observed Lucy. "How happy their granddaughter must have been with them."

"These probably were her happiest days," said Mrs. Askham.

CHAPTER XXX.

UNEXPECTED GUESTS.

"AFTER the news of my dear Uncle William's death, no one had any heart for society. We mourned him long, and the health of my grandmother was such that no visitors were admitted to see her. But she recovered a little before the winter, and the traditional open-house at Christmas was kept as usual. There were even more garlands ; for the season had been good for hollies and mistletoe—the berries on each were in profusion. The great oak hall with its buffets and armour were decorated with holly and laurels ; an enormous branch of mistletoe hung from the great brass chandelier.

"How well I can recall that great hall of carved oak, black with age and polish ; the groined ceiling, the gallery under it, the arms and armour, all of which had been used by the various Thurlestanes, warriors of ancient days.

There were daggers, cross-bows, bows and arrows with their quivers, pikes, lances, swords of all sizes, shields, huge pistols, guns long and short, thick and thin, spurs of all shapes and sizes, some looking as though they might kill the horse they struck. All these were arranged as trophies, and showed well amongst the evergreens. The armourer kept the arms so bright, they looked ready for use at any moment.

“Although the old-fashioned embossed pewter and brass dishes and tankards, in use in the Thurlestone family till the third Earl brought Court ways down to Becklea with his Cornish Countess and heiress, had been put aside, and thenceforth kept merely as ornamental relics of antiquity on the buffet—being superseded by the Countess’s silver and gold plate—yet at Christmas-time they were always used on the ‘board’ (as it was still called on those particular days) which was spread for the Christmas banquet.

“The viands for the ‘board’ took long to prepare. The baron-of-beef, mounted on a raised table covered with a white cloth, stood by itself to one side of the buffet, and was carved

by the man cook, having on his white cap and dress. The time-honoured boar's head, with a lemon in its mouth, and its white and polished tusks well shown, was mounted on a pewter platter set in the middle of the 'board' (the long table).

"Before this dish sat together the Earl and Countess in high-backed chairs a little raised, and their backs to the fire. The chief guests sat near them, and opposite to them; and the ends of the table were occupied by the young people. The 'board' might be said to groan under the weight and variety of the eatables set upon it. Large branched candlesticks holding huge tallow candles, made at Becklea after the fashion of ancient days, were placed on the table to add to the light of the chandelier, for the hall required much illumination to look well.

"The enormous fireplace with its chimney-corners had the yule-log placed in it with great solemnity on Christmas eve. It required several men to carry it, and was a portion of the trunk of a tree. It was expected to keep burning till New Year's Day, and good luck to the family if

it did. A curtain of tapestry was before each door, and the hall looked thoroughly comfortable.

"Two days before Christmas day, when daylight was closing in, a messenger arrived begging for assistance. A gentleman and lady and their daughter, travellers to the north, had their carriage broken down crossing the moor, some two or three miles away. Immediately my grandfather ordered his coach to go to them and bring them all to Becklea.

"In the course of about three hours they arrived; the lady had been much alarmed at this misadventure on the open moor, and was shivering with cold when brought in, carried by her husband. My grandparents and I were at the door of the great hall to receive them. Their accent told at once that they were Scotch people. They declared their gratitude for this prompt assistance in the broadest Scotch; so much so, that, excepting to understand what they intended to express, no one really knew a word they said. My grandfather called them (having asked their servants) Mr. and Mrs. Deal. Of course they knew who we

were. It was very awkward not understanding what they said, till we got accustomed to their broad accent and outlandish words; but I, especially, soon came to be friends with Miss Deal, to whom, despite her red hair and freckles, I became much attached.

"I thought they were without exception the very ugliest people I had ever seen; the bones of their faces were so prominent. The father and daughter had large prominent teeth, pale lips, short noses, thick tawny skins, with quantities of great brown freckles, even on their hands, and tawny red hair—his with a good deal of grey in it. The mother was sallow, with dark hair and eyes, and an aquiline nose; but no more pleasing than her husband and daughter, and had the same great bones in her face.

"She was placed by the fire, and a cordial was brought to her. She soon began to revive, thanking my grandmother for her trouble, and asking how soon a conveyance could be got to take them on, or back to York. But, as a matter of course, they could not be allowed to

depart, especially as it was hard upon Christmas time, when no one could be suffered to leave who had come within the doors, unless under the most urgent circumstances. So they were conveyed to apartments made ready on the first intimation of their being in need of them.

“ As I said, I became much attached to Miss Deal, notwithstanding her ugliness, which I soon forgot ; for she had the charms of intelligence and good-nature, added to enthusiasm. Her father also was a very pleasant person, and made himself an agreeable companion to ourselves and our other guests ; but Mrs. Deal was no favourite with any one. She was always complaining ; nothing suited her. My grandmother took infinite pains to make her feel at home and happy, but to no avail. Her daughter and husband were evidently quite accustomed to this temper, and took no particular notice of it ; and it appeared to me she was better when left quite alone. She then began to try to associate with others.

“ They had never been in England at Christmas before, and our customs were strange and

amusing to them ; for it appears they take no sort of notice of Christmas in Scotland, ignoring it as they do Good Friday and Easter. We had a severe winter ; the weather was especially bad further north ; the communication was stopped for some time, and in consequence their visit to us lasted more than a month.

" My Uncle Henry came for Christmas, and remained longer than usual. Miss Deal had a lively spirit, and some repartee, which amused him very much, so that a flirtation ensued between them, to which in my mind she was not averse ; and if she really felt any regard for him I am sorry for her, for he went on in the same way with any girl he met ; and was taking in his ways, so people said ; but he was not what I admired, and I am sure he only intended to amuse himself for the passing moment. It would have been a good thing for him if he had taken a fancy to her and married her. She had plenty of good sense, in which he was lacking, and the family might have been saved. But, alas ! what is the use of these 'ifs' and 'ands' ; it was not to be !

" Nevertheless, I never saw my Uncle Henry so

polite to any one else, or so apparently anxious to please. He was good-looking, and always fashionably dressed ; besides having, when he wished to please, quite the manners of a fine gentleman, and a man of the world. Thus I was not surprised that dear Jessie (Miss Deal) was well disposed to receive his attentions.

“ My grandmother, since my Uncle William’s death, clung to her son Henry with double affection, and wished him to remain at Becklea, or at any rate to be more often there ; hut he had always excuses for being absent. It is well she did not know of his wild life and gambling propensities, or she would have been miserable.

“ When the Scotch family first came to us, my grandfather was not exactly pleased ; though of course he could not do otherwise than he had done towards them, in offering them unlimited hospitality. The reason of his displeasure was the fact of their nationality ; he having, through his Royalist feelings, a deeply-rooted aversion to the Scotch ; ‘ because,’ as he said to my grandmother, ‘ they were traitors, and had sold their King for a price—their own countryman too ; it was what no one could forgive or forget ; and

never till now, as far as he knew, had a Scotchman put his foot within the door of a Thurlestone for those reasons. He thought the end of all prosperity to the family must be come, or be at hand, when traitors to the Royal cause had been admitted within his doors.'

" My grandmother tried to dispel these ideas, saying that the betrayal of the King (Charles I.) had certainly been a most wicked act, but that it had occurred above a hundred years back ; no doubt the perpetrators of it had sufficiently suffered for their wrong-doing, and there was perhaps little likelihood of the families of their Scotch guests having been concerned in the betrayal, which would be a coincidence scarcely likely to happen. She begged him not to sully his hospitality by nurturing these thoughts ; she added that the Deal family seemed unoffending people, and their visit might be but a short one.

" My grandfather agreed with her on some points, and promised he would not show his aversion. My grandmother gave me strict injunctions to be all that was polite and kind to them, which I assured her I should have great pleasure in

doing, as I had taken a fancy to Miss Deal and liked her much, although she was so plain-looking. This conversation took place in my grandmother's dressing-room, after our guests had retired to their rooms the second night of their arrival.

" Everything went on smoothly with us ; but amongst the servants there was almost open war. They could not understand each other ; and the shouting that went on, each trying to enforce his or her meaning on the other's understanding by the undue raising of the voice, was such, that Pinfold, my grandmother's tirewoman, and Brough, the housekeeper, said that if it went on much longer they should go crazy.

" They both came to my grandmother with their complaints ; and when the weather became so severe that the departure of the Scotch guests for the North could not be thought of, Pinfold, in distress at the prolongation of the visit, said to my grandmother that the behaviour of the Scotch servants was such they could hardly put up with it downstairs.

" ' Well, but what do they do ? ' asked my grandmother.

“ ‘ Oh, my Lady, to hear them swear is something dreadful ; they can’t open their lips without the most dreadful oaths. Such things as one never heard before, I’m sure, my Lady. How they can be[’] Godfearing people as they pretend to be, and say such words, I can’t think.’

“ ‘ What do they say ? ’

“ ‘ Oh, my Lady, I couldn’t shape my mouth to say them to you, they are so dreadful.’

“ ‘ But, Pinfold, I cannot answer your complaint unless I know what is said.’

“ ‘ Oh, my Lady, pray don’t ask.’

“ ‘ But I shall ; and, moreover, I insist upon knowing. I cannot listen to half a story.’

“ ‘ Well, my Lady—they say—I can’t speak it, my Lady, indeed I can’t.’

“ ‘ Fie, Pinfold ; I thought you were a more sensible woman than to come to me with a pitiful half-story. Dry your tears, and be a rational being. What are these words ? ’

“ ‘ Ablins ! my Lady,’ she shrieked out ; and then continued, ‘ Oh, God forgive me for saying such a word.’

“ ‘ Ablins ? ’ said my grandmother.

“ ‘ Oh, my Lady, pray don’t say it ; it’s too dreadful for your lips.’

“ ‘ But I never heard that word before, and it does not sound like swearing.’

“ ‘ Oh, my Lady, I’m sure it is, and Earnshaw and all of us say so too. Nobody would dare to say it before you. With a loud voice they begin with that word, or they say it in the middle of a sentence, till one shivers in one’s shoes to hear ‘em.’

“ ‘ And is that all ? ’

“ ‘ Oh no, my Lady, there is another more dreadful word. They point into a cup or a saucepan or a plate, and they say, “ Intillt,” ’ and she shuddered as she spoke.

“ ‘ Intillt ? what does that mean ? ’

“ ‘ Oh, don’t say it, my Lady.’

“ ‘ How do they say it ? ’

“ ‘ They point into the cup—only think how shocking, my Lady—or anything, and they say, “ Water intillt,” or anything in that way, or “ Salt intillt.” And coachman says it must be the very worst sort of swearing, next to

“damnation,” asking your Ladyship’s pardon, and——”

“‘This is the strangest story I ever heard,’ interposed my grandmother. ‘I must ask my Lord about it, for I do not understand it myself.’

“So the matter rested for the present, our servants taking so great an aversion to the Scotch men and maid that they scarcely spoke to or noticed them.

“I had become exceedingly friendly with Jessie, as I now called her; but nothing would induce her to call me by my Christian name, although she said she dearly liked to hear me call her by hers. I loved her. Who could help it? Such frankness, such lively wit, kindness for all, and no thought for herself. I thought she was the most perfect creature I had ever known; and, quite forgetting her bodily imperfections, I considered her grown quite handsome.

“One day she gave me a little book; I begged her to write her name and mine in it. Judge my surprise when I found ‘Jessie Alison Dalzell’ written. I was amazed; she explained. We

laughed at our English ignorance in pronouncing Scotch names. I begged her pardon. ‘Oh, don’t do that,’ she said ; ‘it is very amusing.’

“ My grandfather quite got over his prejudices against Scotch people during the visit of the Dalzells (I must henceforth write the name properly ; but the pronunciation was kept much the same as before), and declared, if all the Scotch were equally good-natured and agreeable as Jessie and her father, he could see no objection to them. ‘Ah, but the betrayal of the King !’ he would say with a sigh, and in a solemn voice ; ‘that could not be pardoned.’ But he subsequently came to the conclusion that the Dalzell family had no hand in that.

“ Besides, we reminded him, Mr. Dalzell had told him that his relatives had fought in the King’s army against both Pretenders. This at once elevated them in his judgment, and confirmed his opinion in their favour.

“ One day Jessie and I went to York in their carriage for some small matters of repair that could not be done in the country. I never was

in such a rattling vehicle ; the great chains hanging from the axletree for the drag made a clanging noise ; the carriage swerved from side to side, and creaked and groaned as if it would come down. But Jessie said the timbers were strong, and it was their old travelling coach, many years old, and the best fitted for rough roads.

“ We did amuse ourselves in York, where we remained till the next day ; Holt, the groom of the chambers, and my maid being with us to watch over our safety.

“ We went to the Minster, with which Jessie was much delighted. We stayed for the service, and Jessie wished they were allowed organs in churches in Scotland. The voluntary was one of Corelli’s. I never saw such an effect as it produced on her. She sat like one entranced ; tears flowed fast down her cheeks ; at last she sobbed aloud, she could not speak ; and when it ended, and we were walking down the nave, she said she knew Corelli’s music well, and that piece was a special favourite of her father’s and hers ; that to hear it in that solemn Cathedral,

echoing through the aisles, the notes swelling and dying, and so beautifully played, was more than she could bear, and she hoped I would forgive her for the foolish burst of feeling, which she could not restrain.

“ Holt waited for us at the western door, where there were a great many people. We got through the crowd to the carriage, Jessie still weeping.

“ The evening was closing in, and Holt suggested that we should go to see some wax-work, which was best seen by candlelight. His proposal pleased me. It would turn Jessie’s thoughts from the music. So we went to the show. We laughed when we left it at the outrageous figures made of the King and Queen, the Prince of Wales and the Princesses, Queen Ann, the great Duke of Marlborough, and other notable persons. We remarked to each other in the show on the legs of the Duke, which looked like mop-sticks, and had no shoes on. The woman said, ‘ Did not the ladies know the story of the poor Duke ? ’

“ ‘ What story ? ’ I asked.

“ ‘Why, miss,’ she answered, ‘the story is, that when his legs was smited off he fowt upon his stumps. Ay, miss, there’s some poetry about that.’

“ We could not help smiling at her mistake. However, I dare say it did equally well for her visitors.

“ ‘Poor gentleman !’ she continued ; ‘he was a great warrior, and when the page came riding up to tell his lady Duchess he was killed in battle in the wars, she came down from out of her tower and heard the news, and she said she should never smile again.’

“ Jessie was amused at this show, but did not recover her spirits the whole evening. She could not forget the organ, and said, if this be the general effect of organs in churches, she was glad that in Scotland they had none.

“ We journeyed home late the next day, for the coach was not finished so soon as expected. Mrs. Dalzell had been more than usually doleful and fidgety on her daughter’s account during her absence, always fearing evil ; but my grand-

father told her there could be no fear of danger, as we had Holt with us. She, however, rushed to the door when the bell rang at the lodge to announce our advent, and seized Jessie in her arms, screaming at her and kissing her. Her father's quiet welcome was far more genuine ; at any rate in appearance. What was it made this woman so hateful ?

“ Oh, how sorry I was when the time came for them to leave for Scotland. Jessie and I promised an eternal friendship and constant correspondence. We tenderly bade each other farewell, hoping to meet again, and that soon. They drove off, she and I in tears—never, never to behold each other again ! I believe even the servants were sorry to part ; for we had, after that outbreak from Pinfold, consulted the Dalzells as to the hideousness of the words used by their servants ; and with much diversion on both sides we found out their innocent meanings.

“ I myself had with a very solemn and blushing face asked Jessie the meaning of ‘ intillt.’ She screamed with laughter, and wrote it down

‘intill’t,’ ‘into it;’ and ‘ablins,’ ‘perhaps, to be able.’ She told her father, and we were much entertained.

“All this was duly explained to Pinfold, who, however, scarcely believed it, or was unwilling to own she had duped herself. Perfect peace and friendship reigned in the kitchen after the doubtful words were explained; and I believe all but Pinfold were sorry to part with their Scotch companions; but she, poor woman, excellent as she was, could not get over her repugnance to the Scotch dialect.

“‘Why can’t they use proper Christian words, if they want to talk, and not speak that gabbling nonsense that nobody can understand, in that ugly sing-song way,’ was her constant cry.”

“That must have been the time when I met her and her weeping companion coming out of the Minster,’ said the Colonel.

“What a pity for you both that you did not make yourself known, uncle,’ said Lucy.

“In point of etiquette it was for her to make

the recognition ; but I am now thoroughly convinced she did not see me. She never looked towards me."

"I am so sorry, uncle. What a change it would have made in both your lives."

"Lucy, it was not to be."

END OF VOL. II.



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